IN THIS ISSUE...

Staff Box: (In order of appearance)
Leo: ^_^
Jay: scrink-diddled fumble-whumpper
Willow: ⠿
Arthur: do bimpnottin
Teddy: dabungus
Lucas: Douthongka
Nicholas: pingas
Jordan: *screeching noises*
Mia: iquahowsu
María: ʔe̯uːæʔ
Zipper: fuck
J: ŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮ ŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮ ŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮŮ
Justice: *gurgle*
Sam:

Front Frontest Cover: Leo Zhang
Front Front Cover: Nicholas Utakis-Smith
Front Back Cover: J. E. Cramer

Submissions are due always, constantly, so submit forever. You can submit in any format (no PDFs please) by CD, Flash Drive, singing telegram, carrier pigeon, paper airplane, Fed-Ex, Pony Express, or email. Get your submissions to omen@hampshire.edu, the Omen Office, Leo's mailbox (1593), or Jay's mailbox (0370).

Policy

The Omen is an every-other-week-ly publication that is the world's only example of the consistent application of a straightforward policy: we publish all signed submissions from members of the Hampshire community that are not libelous. Send us your impassioned yet poorly-thought-out rants, self-insertion fan fiction, MS Paint comics, and whiny emo poetry: we'll publish it all, and we're happy to do it. The Omen is about giving you a voice, no matter how little you deserve it. Since its founding in December of 1992 by Stephanie Cole, the Omen has hardly ever missed an issue, making it Hampshire's longest-running publication.

Your Omen submission (you're submitting right now, right?) might not be edited, and we can't promise any spellchecking either, so any horrendous mistakes are your fault, not ours. We do promise not to insert comical spelling mistakes in submissions to make you look foolish.

Your submission must include the name you use around campus: an open forum comes with a responsibility to take ownership of your views. (Note: Views expressed in the Omen do not necessarily reflect the views of the Omen editor, the Omen staff, or anyone, anywhere, living or dead.)

The Omen staff consists of whoever shows up for Omen layout, which usually takes place on alternate Friday nights in the basement of Merrill in the company of a computer with an extremely inadequate monitor. You should come. We don't bite. You can find the Omen every other Tuesday in Saga, the post office, online at http://bork.hampshire.edu/~omen/, and just about any other place we can find to put it.

Find all issues here!

THE OFFICIAL OMEN HAIKU:

Views in the Omen (5)
Do not necessarily (7)
Reflect the staff's views (5)

The Omen
CAUTION: WIDE LOAD
BY JIM DAVIS
HIS 58TH BOOK
and 6th issue

EDITORIAL

SEND OUT THE CLOWNS

by Leo Zhang and Jay Poggi

standing on a chair and screaming at the top of my lungs **PENIS**

Is that really how we're starting this?

this is how i'm dealing with my anxiety attacks

That's so valid.
Anyway, what's up party people. Welcome to another flavor-blasted jelly-filled (<— ???) issue of The Omen. This one's special for two reasons, the first of which you've likely already noticed: it's IN COLOR 👍 [do something annoying in InDesign. oh wait no we're screenshotting this]

The other special thing is something you may not yet be aware of, but the supersensors among you may have picked up that something is amiss with your sniffers. That's right: this is the last issue of The Omen……………………………………………that Leo and I will be editing.

surprise…? 🎉

It's a [gender]!¶
¶
Uh¶

Yeah. After this issue, the Leo and Jay you know as editors will be dead, and we'll be reborn as Leo and Jay (normal). [<— lie] We'll be pretty much the same, but with a lot more free time, and with no outlet for draining the thought-gunk from our mind-swamps (i.e. we'll be much worse). Don't worry about us, though. You're probably wondering, "B-b-but, what's gonna happen to The Omen?? 🥺 [can you put a pathetic emoji here?]" Worry not. We've found a pair of just the right sort of weirdo to keep this baby fed and burped in our stead.¶
WE'RE WASTING SO MUCH SPACE WE ONLY HAVE A PAGEhiw do you suggest things on movileOH hit the options thingy in the top right yeah there ya go

Fear not. we've found a dynamic duo who are, as of right now, still sane (that won't last long) (and, importantly, we didn't have to pull them off the street to get them to do this job). You may already know them, it's a small school. Their names are **Willow Watson** and **Maxwell Gamboa** and they are going to do a much better job than us like are you seeing this shit? have you read The Omen these past two years? I mean the amount of stupid idiot bullshit we serve you people, beaming with vacant eyes as if it's the food you ordered.

uh oh we're almost out of space. anyway find our genuine thoughts/feelings on pages 45 & 47 (we were physically in the same house while writing this and this is what we did.) we're fine

---

Jason (Jay) Poggi
10:59 PM Today
Replace: "jelly-filled (<— ???" with "flavor-blasted"

Jason (Jay) Poggi
10:59 PM Today
don't accept this

Leo Zhang
11:00 PM Today
ok

Jason (Jay) Poggi
11:01 PM Today
WRITING THIS MADE ME TEARY HELP

Leo Zhang
11:12 PM Today
really bad

Jason (Jay) Poggi
11:13 PM Today
yuh huh

Jason (Jay) Poggi
11:13 PM Today
got anything better?

Leo Zhang
11:13 PM Today
who do you think i am? albert einstein? go away

Jason (Jay) Poggi
11:14 PM Today
EINSTEIN'S NOT THE SHMUCK CO-WRITING THIS PIECE WITH ME

Leo Zhang
11:14 PM Today
😐

Picturesque

Artz (pt.1)
by Jordan Hughes

Submitted by Andrew Fernandez

Artz (pt.2)
by Jordan Hughes

HER PRONOUNS ARE THEY/THEM!!

student affairs + our pets
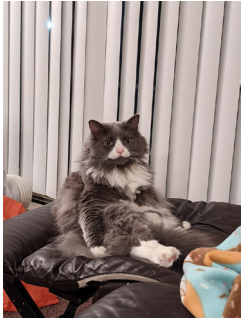## please enjoy these super cute cutie photos of our fur children :')
Submitted by Rachel Kremer

Dean of Students & VP of Student Affairs Zauyah Waite's dogs Chop + Elvis!

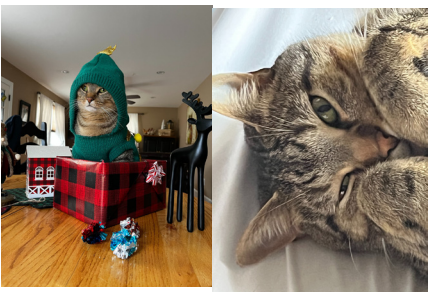**Office Manager of Health and Counseling Jodi Black's dog Mary**

Health + Wellbeing Advocate Isabella Grady's cat Thor

Lori Bouchard - Administrative Assistant & Dispatch Coordinator for Campus Safety + Wellbeing

Filo

Nelson

Mercy

Assistant to the VP of Student Affairs & Dean of Students Kimberly Sizelove's dogs Wolfie, Yurei and Isabella

Administrative Coordinator for Student Engagement Alice Loeb Jenkin's pup Daisy and....

Our newest member of the division, Kayla Schlenz, Director of Restorative Practices's cats!!

Omen

Wisp
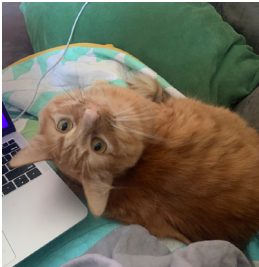
Fae

Assistant Director of Student Engagement Rachel Kremer's cat Louie + dog Frankie

Chris Holmes - Student Engagement Coordinator

Benny

Betsy

Billy

have a meeting with or stopping by the office of one of staff members above? be sure to ask them for more pics of their pets!! 🐑

two years
by willow watson
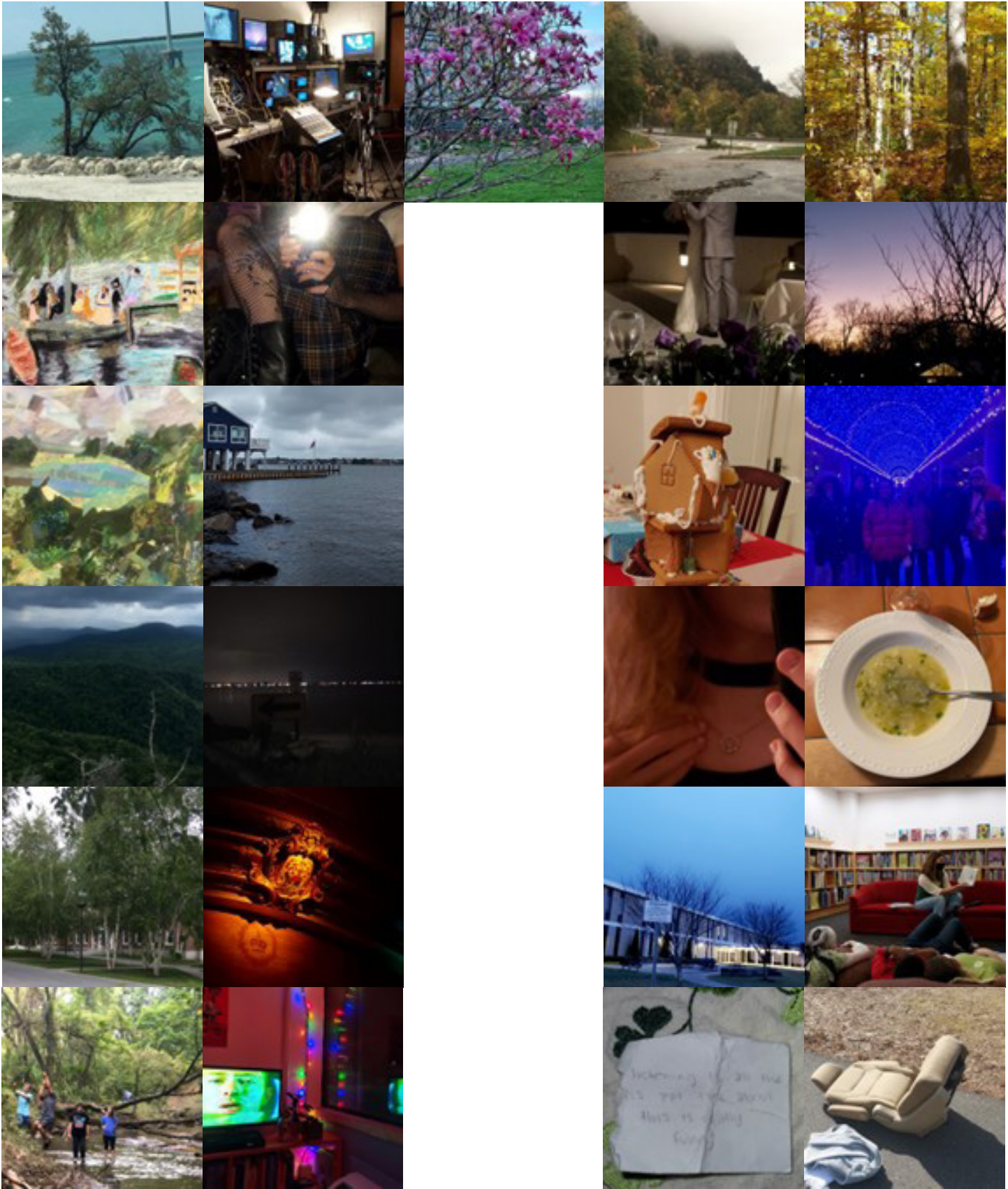
these are the covers of each of the monthly playlists i have made, starting with my first one in april of 2021. i don't tend to do much work in color, but i am proud of these pictures, & i think that they are interesting especially in relation to one another. for me they are inseparably tied to both the music & events they represent, & together they are an image of my development over the last two years. for the sake of clarity, i am including the names & dates of each one, moving from the top down, column by column.

column one:
seabase flight! (april 2021)
jams to get vaccinated to (may 2021)
vibrating in art class (june 2021)
oatmeal & silence at 7 am (july 2021)
anxiously filing nails (august 2021)
daydreaming of goodwill (september 2021)

column two:
round two. (april 2022)
fishnets!!! (may 2022)
the calm before the storm (june 2022)
well & truly (burnt) out (july 2022)
detransition, baby (august 2022)
submit to the omen (september 2022)

column three:
hyperfixation (april 2023)

column four:
sleeping in a sketchy hotel (october 2021)
solitary poolside boggle (november 2021)
just three months away! (december 2021)
homemade chokers (january 2022)
rehearsal till five! (february 2022)
climax! - passing notes (march 2022)

column five:
late-night loitering (october 2022)
academic stress (november 2022)
alone together in snow (december 2022)
leek & potato soup (january 2023)
rat double feature! (february 2023)
mourning dove's call (march 2023) 🐑

~ Section

CO2 Levels in a Merrill Dorm Room
by Mia Sanghvi

Hi! My name is Mia, and I'm a Div I student. You've probably seen my other Omen submissions in the past, like the Sexy Madlibs for this year's Erotica edition. This semester I had the opportunity to take Psychological Science Outside of the Academy, taught by Ethan Ludwin-Peery. In class, we've discussed sex and drugs (among other stuff) but not rock and roll. We have to supplement that ourselves.

Pictured on the left: Me with black and white face paint to look like "the Demon" (Gene Simmons) from the band KISS. Yes, I did go to class like this.

But that is not the point of this submission, so let me get straight to it!

Background
One of the psychology(ish) research bloggers we've discussed in class is a guy writing under the pseudonym Scott Alexander. We reviewed some of his research about CO2 levels in residential areas and their impacts on well-being, as higher CO2 levels *might* be correlated with poorer health. One blog post was about an experiment he did with his audience over the internet. Participants altered their sleeping environment by opening a window, having plants in their room, etc., to see if that improved their sleep. Some of us students thought that room size differences could be impacting his results. Also, the survey didn't involve measuring CO2 levels, so it's hard to gather whether CO2 levels were actually impacted. This topic piqued my interest as someone who had issues with my Merrill heater/AC unit. But, I kind of forgor about CO2 levels in the following weeks.

Editor's note: Wanna click links? You can access the online version of this and all issues by using the QR code or link located on the inside cover!

Then Ethan brought a CO2 monitor to class. I made a comment about trying it out in one of the dorms..and he just gave it to me??? So for five days, from March 22 to the 27th, I monitored the CO2 levels in my room. Thank you Ethan for enabling me.

Methods

Basically, I plugged in the CO2 monitor and placed it on the little side table attached to my bed. Then I recorded what the CO2 levels were in parts per million (ppm) and the time. This data tracking was pretty informal as I did it whenever I felt like it – usually when entering or leaving my room. I wrote down the information on my phone's notes app, which Ethan then converted to a Google spreadsheet for easier viewing and graph making.

Results

Honestly, I was kind of surprised at the data that I got. The lowest level of CO2 I collected was 388 ppm, and the highest was 1,648 ppm. For context, anything above 1,000 ppm is considered poor quality, and outdoor levels are roughly around 400 ppm. Anything between 400 and 1,000 ppm is considered decent indoor CO2 levels. I was also intrigued by how quickly the levels could rise. At 9:00 PM on March 25, 2023, the CO2 levels were at 388 ppm, with the window open. I closed the window shortly after, and just four hours later, the CO2 monitor read 1,236 ppm at 1:02 AM on March 26, 2023. That's an 848 ppm increase. There was also a time (2:24 PM March 23, 2023) when I moved the monitor for be lower to the ground, and I got a lower CO2 level reading? I'm not quite sure what to make of this. Overall, keeping my window open was associated with decreased CO2 levels in my room. Here are some somewhat pretty graphs to visualize my data, courtesy of Ethan.

co2 ppm vs. date & time

co2 ppm vs. date & time
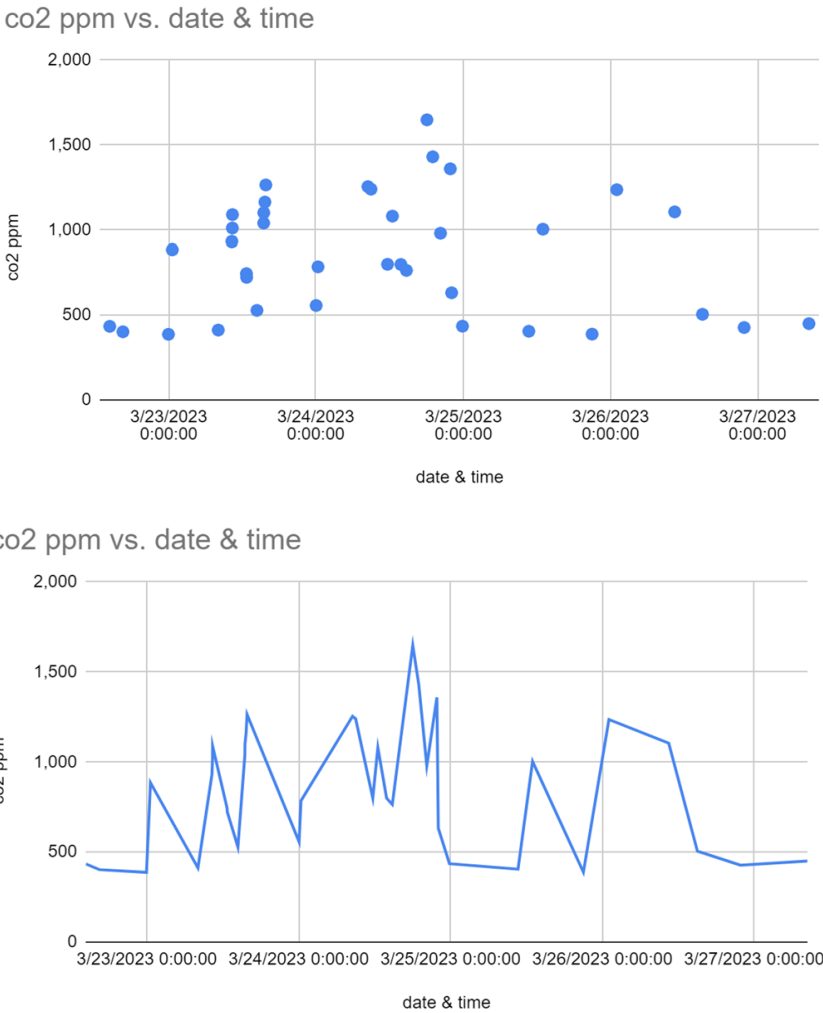
So, both show CO2 levels in ppm (y-axis) by date and time (x-axis). Time is written in the 24-hour notation. The 0:00:00 on the x-axis just indicates midnight of each day. The first graph, the scatter plot, more accurately presents my data, as there were different lengths of time between recording each data point. However, I think the line graph is visually nicer to look at. Data points below 500 ppm were usually when my window was open. I kind of got lazy the last two days, so that's why the data points are more spread out lol.

Limitations

Obviously, no study will be perfect, and my study is quite far from it, haha. Here are some things that may be impacting my data and stuff I feel like I could've done better.

- I could have recorded my data at set intervals. However, I'm a college student with classes and usually a life, so collecting data at set times (like every hour) would be challenging. I'm unsure if that would impact my data much, though.
- I could've taken more accurate notes along with the data. This could have added more context to why CO2 ppm was lower or higher.
- I did not sleep in my room for most nights that I did this study. I've been dealing with this odd health issue, so I've been staying over at a friend's place. Therefore, I don't have much data about overnight CO2 levels.
- Next time I'll write down my data in Excel or something similar instead of my notes app for legibility.
- I might have been too close to the CO2 monitor device, which could've made the readings higher than intended. Although Merrill dorms, and dorms in general, are probably smaller than your average bedroom, so I'm not sure if this would've impacted much.

Conclusion

A lot of the CO2 levels I got were above 1,000 ppm, which isn't great. However, this probably indicates that Merrill has decent insulation, which is good for getting through the cold winters. I don't want to assume, but since Merrill dorms are roughly the same size, CO2 levels might be similar in other rooms. This study was less about well-being associated with CO2 and more about reporting CO2 levels in dorms; however, it might not hurt to keep your window open if you're feeling unwell. I'm not a medical professional, though, so what do I know. I didn't really measure how I physically felt during this time, which I'll probably do if I ever get the chance to do this study again. Hopefully, I'll be well enough to sleep alone by then, too lol.

I'd love to hear what other people think about this! If you'd like to get in touch, you can email me at miss22@hampshire.edu. I'm always looking for ways to improve how I conduct and present my research, and I'd be interested in seeing if anyone else on campus has done something similar. If you want to replicate/improve on what I did, I believe the CO2 monitor I used is the "CO2 Meter AZ-0004" from co2meter.com for $139 or $99 on Amazon (in 2023). This should be the same one Scott Alexander links in his blog.

Here's the link to my raw data if you want to take a look at it yourself. :)

Also, I highly recommend taking a class with Ethan if you have even a super tiny liking for psychology. He's a chill dude!

OK, article over. Bye! 🤩 🐑

PENIS BLAST !!!

Delirium
by Malfoy Kimmel

At time of writing (evening of 16th April 2023), I am sick with something of which I do not know the name. *Physically* sick, to be clear-- despite the ragged nest that my room has become in such a short time, despite the isolation and the curtains drawn, I'm mentally fine. Often, being physically ill triggers a depressive episode, but that hasn't happened this time around (yet).

I am trying to finish whatever I want to say before I get better, because once I get better, I will forget all the things I felt, and tell myself that it wasn't that bad. I want to imprint these sensations onto paper before I forget: the panting, hot breath as I stumbled into my room; taking my temperature on the edge of my bed and watching the numbers creep up; waking up at 2 AM so dazed with fever that I can hardly move; reading my friends' worried texts with such numbness and removed-ness that they might as well be for someone else; sweating so much that the bed becomes damp beneath me (gross). When I am better, I will forget how bad it was. I will take care of myself for the next few days after I get better, and then I will forget, and start sleeping and eating too little, will stop drinking enough water when I go outside, will not wash my hands enough and act surprised when I become bedridden again.

If it sounds like I'm complaining, it's because I am. I should be grateful, at least, that I have a lot of tissues (I know that there are things to blow out why will they not come out when I blow??!?) and that I have friends to check in on me and bring me food and meds and a rapid test (negative) and that I have leftovers in the fridge so I only have to subject myself to the dining commons food once (don't want food poisoning on top of everything else) and that it's a Sunday, so I can stay in bed and not feel too badly about it (even though I have assignments that are days and weeks overdue, which I am trying desperately not to think about).

I am writing this in a strange delirium. Early in the morning, I walked down the hall to go to the bathroom even though I didn't want to; the overhead lights were ghostly and I had to steady myself with both hands on the walls, which were closing in with an anxious, unpleasant psychedelia. I keep hearing voices that scream and whisper and I can't be completely sure whether they are coming from outside my window or inside my own, cotton-stuffed head. Wearing the same clothes for over 24 hours has made me stiff and repetitive. Today and yesterday are the same. In both of them, it hurts to swallow.

Whether I have a virus or a bacterium or whatnot, I will get better. Please let me get better. I can feel my life and other people's lives moving on without me. The mattress beneath me is swaying like a boat taking me down a dark river to hell. Curse the fact that Health Services is not open on the weekends! I cannot medicate without knowing what it is I am medicating. I am taking too much Tylenol. I am going to keep drinking tea and sucking on cough drops and drinking powders that will put me to sleep.

I should sleep. Please let me feel better in the morning. Please let me feel better in the morning. Please let 🐑

Hi This Is Really Dark I Promise I'm Okay I Just Have 19 Years Worth Of An Emotional Journey To Process Haha I've Never Submitted To The Omen Before And Am Really Excited To Do So; Enjoy :)
by Jake Y

Sometimes I feel like
I'm that little girl again
So helplessly angry at the world
Shaking in anger
No one can control her
No one can understand what she's feeling
No one can comprehend her words
No one can see into her emotions
Enough to perceive them
She wonders why she has no friends
She wonders why no one
Can hear her screams
She wonders why she can't fit into
Any of the boxes
That society is trying to squeeze her in
She feels like she's drowning
The people she cares about not
Showing her a way out
She is a child
Yet she feels like a prisoner
Chained down by her emotions
No one around to bail her out
Despite being surrounded by people
Who say they care about her

("It's poetry, boo <3") 🐑

I Remember:

A reflection on queer spirituality written in pen on one side of two index cards.
Scavenging and building where I find there to be emptiness.
By: María Baxter, and all that has crossed eir (my, María's) path.
A collection, now put onto this page, or wherever you see it in your moment. Hello.

I remember my Abuelo.
I know him down my mother's line.
He knew me, not really.

I carry him with me, as with
I carry my mother with me,
and all that's around me.
built an ofrenda inside of me.

held together by love
scavenged where I could find it
built where I had space
it runs down my mother's side.
He was loved, he loved her, and
She loves me,
And I love me, myself.

There's a scavenged spirit of love, staying,
running down my mother's side.

Dedicated to those who cannot see color in the way most do. I am not color blind but the topic is important and mostly overlooked. A lot of what I am writing is based on what my uncle and close friend have told me about being color blind. This piece is from the perspective of someone who has achromatopsia(Seeing in blacks, grays, and whites). This version of color blindness is considered a "disability" by the ADA but I would hope to visualize it as a different way of seeing the world. That's not to forget the obstacles that it may cause and the hardships people with it may go through but nonetheless these are still humans and they aren't any less "normal" than any one of us. I have not experienced this but have researched this. Even with this "research" and the perspectives of loved ones with similar conditions, I cannot guarantee that what I am saying is identical to the daily experience of someone with this condition. But, I hope to explore a world in which we all live in through a perspective we do not often hear from. I am completely open to learning more about this from anyone holding this perspective. Please Email me at wick22@hampshire.edu .

contrasting visions
by Clay Kesling

My eyes, tired and steeped in exhaustion, gaze over at the window as I animate myself after a long sleep. I've always noticed the small details of life. Maybe that's because of my view of the world but nonetheless it is the way I see. My eyes. I've grown curious of course as to what color is and what it changes. I can't imagine a different way of seeing. This is the way it always has been. This is normal for me. This is just life. "Well, isn't it bland or boring?" They may not capture a twilight indigo sky, sunrise pinkish orange, blooming green on a spring tree, bright yellow of a dandelion field, but that doesn't mean these things aren't beautiful and vibrant and equally as mesmerizing to me.

I look up at the night sky and see bright blips of light. Stars illuminating the devouring darkness of night.

I walk outside early in the morning to see the sunset. The brightness of the sun climbs into the sky. The shadows of evening slowly dissipate as the sun rises further. The bustle of birds and cars waking up. My once cold body slowly warms. It's beautiful.

As I meander around in these weeks where spring overtakes the winter, I spot the trees and flowers beginning to creep out and say hello. Small ecosystems building. Leaves growing rampantly. Birds chirping and perching along the trees. A stiff warm-ish wind rustles the freshly grown foliage. The once naked, bare trees now become covered in life. It's beautiful.

With this spring warmth, I notice flowers blooming, bushes blossoming, dandelions overtaking the meadows… They aren't blue or red or pink or yellow. They are symbols that the seasons finally changed. Symbols that the buzzing bees will soon emerge back into existence after hibernation. Each one is different and uniquely shaped. Some smell sweet. Some travel in packs. Others are sparsely hidden amongst the woods and under logs. They are everywhere. It's beautiful.

What's the big deal with color? Anytime I tell people I can't see the way they do, I get such drastic responses. "What do you see when you look at that(points at some random object)? How can you drive? I'm so sorry that must be really hard. Were you born this way? Can you fix it? Is it permanent? I can't "imagine" life without color. You are so inspiring. Do you dream in color?" This is just the way it's always been. Don't alienate me. I do my work, same as you. I go through life with my own obstacles, sure, but it's always been this way and I learned how to live like this. My life isn't without "color". It is amazingly beautiful. It surprises me every single day I wake up. Breathing the same air you are. Looking up at the same sun.

Rethinking Hampshire Community:
The Interconnected Role of Various Groups
in Saving a College

by Jonathon Podolsky 94F

When I attended the on-campus screening of "The Unmaking of a College" last spring, a student in the audience asked why we hadn't been told more about the events of the 2019 crisis. I remembered the brave students holding hands along the perimeter inside the RCC when the board announced they wouldn't accept a full F19 class. Right after that, students invited me to visit the sit-in as it was starting.

I want to share my experience as an activist and later advisor to save college movements at three colleges listed in "Colleges that Change Lives" and one former women's college. I learned about the tragic mistakes Hampshire made before, during, and after its crisis. Students can play a critical role in making change at the college, but it requires knowing the history and underlying dynamics alumni in particular know too well.

I seek to bring this information to the community despite built-in disincentives for doing so. The system depends on explicit and implicit rewards for toeing the line and deterrents for critiquing it. **The college has made impressive improvements in enrollment, fundraising, and curricular innovation.** Yet, the willingness to question the status quo is critical because, despite the parts of Hampshire that are very innovative, there are stagnant elements that pull in the opposite direction. In particular, I focus on some areas that Hampshire often doesn't understand or want to face, to its own detriment. This includes its own students and alumni, the inter-connectedness of various groups, and power dynamics. James Baldwin wrote, "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced."

We were often told that things are done in particular ways because Hampshire is on a financial precipice and needs to heal. The truth is that the healing period is never over. Stagnation has thrived on the excuse that the situation is too precarious to accept outside critique and ideas for new ways of doing things. Hampshire now has exceptional leadership and made many improvements and innovations. Yet the same forces that fight to maintain the status quo in certain ways remain in place. Now we see there can be an existential threat to the college based on stagnation. As Robert A. Heinlein wrote, "There is nothing in this world so permanent as a temporary emergency."

Justifications for seeking a strategic partner, which almost led to the college's demise, were fatalistic assessments of donor fatigue, plummeting enrollment, and curricular stagnation; the powers that be had this delusion but not the grassroots movement, which overthrew them. Christoph Cox, former Dean of Faculty at Hampshire (after the crisis), told Vice News Tonight: "If for 50 years you graduate a steady stream of organic farmers, social activists, and experimental filmmakers, I mean that doesn't generate an enormous financially sound alumni base, so that's part of it." But history has shown that was not the cause of the crisis; the same graduate base is donating much more now and making up for the lost revenue from the prospective students who were turned away. If the college had been able to understand better and adequately harness its alumni base, it could have raised more money without having to experience a near-death experience.

While Hampshire briefly welcomed the grassroots movement that helped save the day, it immediately began to push away this source of energy and innovation even amongst some of the coalition leaders who had sought their help and invited their participation, and even before the acute crisis had ended—this isolated students from alumni.

Hampshire thinks of itself as radically inclusive, but to many, it is not. The college doesn't see the effects on individuals or even major groups who become disaffected and leave, taking valuable feedback with them. This article is a small attempt to buck that trend.

In the following sections of this article, issues are surfaced related to alternative colleges, Mim Nelson's compensation, democracy at Hampshire, why Hampshire was created, and the vast underutilization of help from alumni.

Alternative Colleges in Danger

On a broad scale, many of the most exceptional small liberal arts colleges are under duress financially, which changes how these institutions can operate. One of the colleges I fought to save was Mills College, which had a far stronger financial position than Hampshire; it was a historic women's college open to non-binary and trans students. Some estimated its campus is worth over $1 billion for the land alone. If colleges like Mills can close, Hampshire remains vulnerable. Hampshire's board is committed to independence and has an exceptional president, but changes in leadership can cause people to lose confidence and change course.

For exceptional colleges to survive requires broader collaboration and engagement among all stakeholders. Alumni must be more than a donor class, they need to be actively engaged in the college's well-being. In some ways, akin to what happened during the crisis and unlike the sometimes tokenized manner that was quickly reverted to. These types of relationships and creative approaches to problem-solving are precisely what we need. Reverting to the classic model of liberal corporation will not cut it.

While Hampshire was created to solve some of the problems of higher education and has had some major successes, it has not been enough to counteract the negative trends in higher education. Hampshire itself has had trouble remaining financially sustainable, as have a number of other alternative schools mentioned in "Colleges that Change Lives". Overall liberal arts have been under massive threat, the rate of change in the world is accelerating and even colleges with higher endowments are being closed. An honest inquiry into the forces within Hampshire that have hampered necessary changes remains critical. Those forces still hamper the fullest realization of a continually innovative and impactful institution.

Leadership Selection - A Fuller Lookback is Needed

Hampshire's threat came primarily from within and that's why it's important to have as wide a base of people included as possible and a clear understanding of these dynamics so that it's not repeated again in the future. Some people believe Mim just listened to the wrong people or as portrayed in the film "The Unmaking of a College" was, in part, a victim of UMass leaders.

The movie's take on Mim Nelson as being the victim of UMass is overly charitable. Mim Nelson received nearly $900,000 in total compensation in 2019, according to Hampshire's IRS 990. Comparing this to compensation for Hampshire's president in previous years, this amounts to a payoff of about half a million dollars. In the same year, when claiming a lack of funds, she let go of almost the entire admissions department and fundraising staff and refused to guarantee the continuation of the Baldwin program. Students were sleeping on concrete floors to protest her decisions endangering their education, the staff and faculty's jobs, and the college's survival.

Jeff Sonnenfeld is an expert featured in the movie. He is the Lester Crown Professor in the Practice of Management at Yale School of Management and Senior Associate Dean for Leadership Studies. He told me:

Mim Nelson and her lieutenants/enforcers were no more victims than were Jeff Skilling CEO at Enron, Elizabeth Holmes CEO of Theranos, and Bernie Ebbers CEO of WorldCom. They also faced external pressures but created fictions about their respective enterprises, lied to all constituents within and external parties about their true strategic plans and situation – fighting back with coercion, intimidation and reprisals against anyone who told the truth.

It takes quite an imagination employing distorted knowledge to twist deceptive bullies into appearing as heroic forces or even as sympathetic victims. The heroic forces were bold loyal faculty, students, and alumni as well as crusading journalists at the local NPR member station and the Hampshire Gazette which, through their persistent FOIA [Freedom of Information Act] diligences,

surfaced the documentation of Nelson's pattern of deceit. That was also called out by fellow five college presidents- and unparalleled condemnation by informed peer institutional partners.

Sadly, bad leaders often fail up and cause harm in their next role. As bad as they are at running institutions, they excel at crafting their own narratives about their tenure, which are accepted by those who benefit from perpetuating them or can't see through it, and because they are granted non-disparage agreements by their employers. An anonymous account of her tenure at the University of New Hampshire, Thomson School of Applied Science was posted on Reddit and articles are easily found about controversies at Newman's Own Foundation during her tenure.

Democracy at Hampshire?
It has been 50 years since Robert Rardin, a Hampshire College professor, wrote about the competing ideas at Hampshire in "Liberal Corporation or Radical Collective: Two Models for a College." This matter has been overwhelmingly settled: Hampshire is a liberal corporation. Legally speaking, Hampshire is a corporation and the board has the ultimate power: it can hire and fire presidents and it can decide to close, stay the course, transform, or become acquired. The important tradition of shared governance in higher education is granted at the board's will and can be taken away just as quickly. Student government can be allowed or taken away by the administration. Tension arises because Hampshire culture aspires to equality, liberation, and critiques of power structures that challenge corporate hierarchies. The real question now is how Hampshire can best understand how to relate to all of its stakeholders.

Gaye Hill, chair of Hampshire's Board of Trustees during the 2019 crisis, told a packed Main Lecture Hall that "We [Hampshire College] are a representational democracy, whether you appreciate that or not." Although the board is comprised mainly of alumni, it's not a representative democracy since all but a few members of the board are picked by the board itself, and all members of the Alumni Action Group (AAG) are picked by the AAG members themselves. This lacks a self-correcting system for avoiding groupthink. Even though they are chosen by a small group, we are sometimes told that we have "representation." Only the alumni trustee is elected by alumni, and even that seat is required to represent the college writ large.

The board remains virtually as opaque as it was in 2019 and there appears not to have been a process that looked into what went wrong with the board's governance during that time. I still see signs that some trustees are fighting for the status quo, are non-inclusive, and hold some of the same neoliberal ideas that got us into trouble in the first place.

Why Was Hampshire Created?
Hampshire was created by other colleges because institutions become stilted as people, processes, and pressures cause gears to become entrenched. The new college started free to innovate, but traditional power dynamics inevitably caught up with Hampshire. Hampshire lost some of its cutting edge compared to other alternative colleges, a major factor affecting enrollment prior to the crisis. It was saved only by a fantastic coalition. Entrenched energies retook much of the control when the crisis ended, dismissing the grassroots movement and depriving Hampshire of the energy therein. Various entrenched powers deliberately and reflexively made grassroots alumni invisibilized to maintain the status quo power structures. Their intentions appear selfish but they had the survival of the institution in mind.

Early Hampshire's plasticity enabled experimentation with the college model. Some parts of Hampshire in 1970 were incredibly fresh and exciting, while others were hundreds of years old, inherited from older institutions. Not having grades, calling professors by their first names, not having majors, and a number of other experiments were a departure from most colleges; however, its core power structure remained the same. Hampshire, like the other colleges, is a corporation run by a board, and employees are divided into staff, faculty, and administration; it has a semester system, etc. Of all the colleges in the consortium, it

was most influenced by Amherst College; a graduate from Amherst was the biggest donor; a disproportionate number of Hampshire's early administration, trustees, and two presidents worked at or had attended Amherst College.

As Hampshire continues to evolve, sometimes it creates things that are new and other times it is influenced by other colleges. Staff come and go between colleges and compare what is being done at each college. In this way, individual colleges, no matter how unique they are, are part of a greater ecosystem and process of co-evolution. Hampshire has an innovative layer covering over deeper layers in which it, and other colleges, are essentially replicants.

Ed Wingenbach told WGBH: "The radical colleges of American higher education, they're the skunkworks for this really kind of stodgy industry." I think it's a more mixed picture where these institutions are also struggling with sustainability and resistance to change.

Undermining Alumni Limits Change
I first saw this when I was part of the re-envisioning coalition, a large group of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and parents. I was one of the point people for the committee tasked by coalition leaders to create a major event to fundraise, present the re-envisioning plan, and unite the community. The committee created the "Our Hampshire Our People" event but quickly saw that one of the coalition leaders sidelined my leadership, causing me to leave the committee.

I was one of three alumni on the re-envisioning committee. We were all removed as soon as it looked like the sands were shifting. The faculty leaders admitted this was for political expediency. This removal was part of dismantling the re-envisioning coalition, which was headed by that committee.

The committee changed its name twice, becoming the Curricular Innovation Committee and the Academic Innovation Planning Group. Core leaders stayed in place as we were replaced by "alumni representatives" who were not chosen by the alumni and didn't survey or report back to us. Rachel Conrad admitted that they were chosen after talking to people on campus. I spoke to one of those "alumni representatives" and complained about the process by which we were removed. Their answer included comments such as "They are smart people…they don't need me…us alumni can be a difficult bunch." This rep had been a supporter of Mim. I remember thinking that in removing the connection from those who had come to help save the college, they weren't likely to get as imaginative and radical change as needed. I also believe that people would donate even more if they were involved in more organic and varied ways because there would be a greater sense of belonging and inclusion.

That same committee later decided that alumni wouldn't be allowed at Ed Wingenbach's first major speech to the community, essentially his inauguration. I brought up my concerns about this with the (now former) alumni director and with our liaison from the AAG (in writing), but they reaffirmed their decision. Some made an excuse that it was because the college couldn't afford a tent to hold it outside and have enough room. They could have even held the speech outside without a tent, as it was 74 degrees with no precipitation.

While this exclusion may have escaped the notice of most of the community, the symbolism was still evident. The re-envisioning coalition, sit-in, and overthrow of the past administration created a rift with much of the remaining administration and they needed to reassert their power. In order to do that, outsider alumni had to be invisibilized and those in power on the re-envisioning committee cooperated with that by exiling alumni back to their expected place on the outskirts as members of an external or donor community, not an integral part of the college itself.

This would have been a perfect fundraising opportunity and a chance to signal greater inclusion. While many things were done well in the last few years, Hampshire went through more austerity than necessary because of excluding much of the grassroots movement. It took away those who might challenge limiting beliefs, bring in outside knowledge, etc.

Involving alumni

Is this article outlining a new vision of the college that is not just radical but overly imaginative and impractical? Does it take a visionary to see these possibilities? In a way, it's quite the opposite. During the crisis of 2019, various groups, including students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents, and other community members, worked in incredible, creative, resourceful, and interconnected ways. It's not just that this more interconnected framework couldn't be imagined; it's not even just that it happened but wasn't learned by those more familiar and guarding of the status quo – it's that the grassroots organizations were actively undermined and invisibilized. They turned away from these new possibilities that would have put Hampshire on a much more accelerated path. While all those who have helped to save Hampshire deserve much credit for bravery, ingenuity, and steering Hampshire away from the path of closure that so many other small liberal arts colleges have taken, there is another path that is supercharged: true inclusion means that the entire community are equal partners and part of the ongoing co-creation of the college.

Problems of Involving Alumni

People who work at the college may be fearful of alumni involvement. I certainly saw this among a portion outside the coalition who felt that alumni were trying to "burn the place down" and were an invading force. Even some of the faculty, who wanted alumni to be part of the coalition helping to save the college, viewed them as a force they were "calling in" instead of an ongoing integral part of the community.

While stakeholder groups such as alumni are part of the community, that doesn't mean it's without limits, needs for roles and boundaries, and downsides. Faculty and staff are often overburdened and fear losing autonomy over their roles. There are also cases in higher ed where alumni are perceived to have too much influence. Corporate or unethical individual donors may negatively affect curriculum, policy, and board decisions. Some people think of major collegiate sports and fraternities/sororities as elements that take away focus from academics and cause other problems.

Being inclusive of alumni is not a complete solution in and of itself. Alumni can be either killers or saviors of the college. After all, the board decided to hire Mim Nelson instead of Ed Wingenbach, who was a candidate at the same time. And it was the board that approved the decision to seek a strategic partner and not accept a full F19 class. However, alumni within a greater movement also played a major role in reversing those decisions.

Conclusion

Many will wonder if this entire article stems from a mentality some call entitlement. Is dissecting Hampshire a privileged activity of rich white people at the expense of looking at labor rights, racial diversity, LGBTQ rights, gender, and other essential justice movements? I believe this either/or lens is mistaken.

All the problems exist at once; it's a multi-layered tapestry, and ignoring any of the issues yields an incomplete view that is detrimental to the necessary understanding of the culture, power dynamics, and emotional economy of the college. Such an understanding would make a massive difference to the college's survival and benefit the lives Hampshire touches. It's essential to recognize the energy and genius of the collectivity of grassroots alumni - especially when they are closely aligned with student interests.

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Surveillance horror stories
by Zain Salim

May 13, 2022 was a day that changed my life-- or at least, thus far it has had a significant impact on my life. That day, I came back on my own from a six-month trip to Pakistan, where my parents are from, to see my extended family (I took a gap year before coming to Hampshire to enable me to go to Pakistan for that long). Upon landing in the U.S., I was interrogated at the airport for an hour. I was asked many questions that were either silly or invasive. For instance:

- I was asked what cities in Pakistan I had visited. After telling the officer the names of the two cities I visited, he asked whether I had been to Waziristan (I hadn't).
- I was asked for the addresses of the relatives whose homes I had stayed at.
- I was asked whether I had fasted for Ramadan. A clear instance of religious profiling.
- I was asked whether I go to school, to which I responded that I had graduated high school the previous year and was taking a gap year. I was then asked what school I was going to and what I intended to study there.
- I was asked whether I was privy to any information about the Taliban (I wasn't; I didn't even have any contact with the Taliban).
- But by far the most disconcerting thing was that I was asked for my phone number and email address. As far as I can tell, this information could have only been relevant to the government if the government wanted to subpoena AT&T and Google for my phone records and emails, respectively.

In addition, I had all my belongings searched. Not just my backpack, but also my suitcases. In fact, in the middle of the secondary screening, the officer told me to go to the baggage claim, get my suitcases, and come back with them so that he could search them. I was carrying many notebooks with me, and he even looked inside those notebooks. That, to me, was the most violating thing.

I should clarify that I'm a US citizen with a US passport and no other citizenship.

In spite of how violating the experience was, I think I could have put it behind me if not for the fact that the officer asked for my phone number and email address. To me, the only conceivable reason why this information would be relevant to the government is if it intended to subpoena AT&T and Google for my phone and email records, respectively. Google and AT&T, like most tech companies, don't notify their users when the government requests their data. Therefore, it's entirely conceivable that the government is monitoring my emails and phone calls. Actually, I no longer use the Gmail address I gave to the officer. Now I prefer to use Protonmail. But I can only use Protonmail for personal communications. Here at Hampshire College, I obviously have to use my Hampshire email address, and that's a Gmail address. Because I've been logged in to my Hampshire email account and personal Gmail account at the same time, Google can easily link the two accounts. Thus, the government might well have subpoenaed Google for data from my Hampshire Google account as well and thus could be reading all the emails I've received and sent during my time at Hampshire, and thus would know everything I am up to.

For all this speculation about still being under government surveillance, do I have evidence that I really am being surveilled? I think I do. Three days after returning from Pakistan, my mother and I each wrote thank-you notes to my grandparents to thank them for taking such good care of me while I was in Pakistan. We mailed them together in the same envelope, and my mother wrote both the destination address and the return address on the envelope. I was nervous about writing the return address on the envelope because I was scared that that would identify us as the sender of the envelope, which would enable the government to intercept the envelope. And in the aftermath of the interrogation, I did see that as quite likely. But I didn't

speak up about it because I felt like my mother would think I was being paranoid. Yet sure enough, the letter took three and a half weeks to reach my grandparents, whereas most letters from the US reach Pakistan within 10 days. During the three and a half weeks, my mother and grandparents all wondered what had happened to the letter; we thought it had gotten lost and would never arrive. I was too shy to suggest that the letter might have been intercepted-- fearful again for being labeled as paranoid. Even after the letter arrived and I remained suspicious that it had been intercepted by the government. The government could have removed the letter from the envelope, read it, put it back in, and then sent it along.

Over the summer, I wrote letters to various relatives and all of them arrived in Pakistan (except for two that I absentmindedly forgot to stamp) in a timely manner. But on none of them had I written my name or address, because I did not want to be so easily identifiable as the sender of all those letters, fearing that the government would otherwise intercept them. Additionally, while I obviously wrote the addresses of the intended recipients in English, I didn't write the *names* of the recipients in English; only in Urdu, again to prevent interdiction that I foresaw.

Three months after returning from Pakistan, my grandmother's 90-year-old aunt sent me a birthday card. But I will never know what she wrote in it. Because the card didn't arrive. Only the torn envelope in which it came, and the torn envelope was wrapped in a plastic bag with a printed note from the USPS apologizing for the fact that the mail had been "damaged". The only way I know it was a birthday card is that it came around the time of my birthday, the envelope had a sticker on it that said "happy birthday", and this great-aunt has a habit of sending birthday cards to even the most distant of relatives on an annual basis.

I was not convinced, however, that the letter was damaged accidentally. To me, it seemed too much of a miracle that the envelope could be salvaged but no trace of the letter could be salvaged. The envelope was torn, but not as badly as one might expect from a mail machine. Rather, it looked like a human being had *tried* to tear the envelope in such a way as to make it seem believable that a machine had actually done it, but had failed. My fear had come true: the government was intercepting my mail.

There is evidence to suggest that the government still intercepts my mail. In October of last year, my mother sent me an absentee ballot she had requested on my behalf. She mailed it to me, and once I received it I filled it out. But then rather than mailing the ballot directly to the county office, I followed her instructions and mailed the ballot to her so that she could put it in a dropbox. Before doing so, I placed the ballot inside the yellow envelope that came with the ballot but then I put that yellow envelope inside a larger white envelope (per my mother's instructions). The ballot, however, took a long time to reach my mother's house. This made my mother and I very worried, and we wondered whether perhaps the government had again intercepted my mail. Luckily, the ballot arrived in time for the election. But my mother said that when she received the envelope, it looked like it had been heavily tampered with.

Now, I am *not* alleging that the government tried to disenfranchise me. Because I had sealed the absentee ballot inside a white envelope, *a priori* the government had no way of knowing what the letter contained. Perhaps if they knew it was an absentee ballot, they wouldn't have messed with it, and it's clear that once they found out it was an absentee ballot they left it alone and let it reach my mother's house. But this is exactly why it is so dangerous for the government to be intercepting peoples' mail; it *could* cause accidental disenfranchisement. Imagine what would have happened if the government had, in the course of intercepting the ballot, torn it so badly that it couldn't be put back in the envelope and mailed?

I would like to point out, however, that even if the interrogation had never happened, even if I wasn't a target of Islamophobic government surveillance, I would *still* have the right to this level of privacy. Privacy is something I have always felt a very strong need for. Even prior to my trip to Pakistan, I had developed a habit of wearing a mask while going for a walk around my suburban neighborhood even when I was walking alone, not because of fear of COVID but because of fear of facial recognition. Even in Pakistan, I found the proliferation of CCTV cameras in homes, businesses, and on the streets of Lahore and Karachi and Islamabad to be so disturbing that initially it was enough to make me wish I were dead. It was only after a daytrip

to a remote rural area where there were no CCTV cameras that I was able to experience a sense of privacy that was such a relief that even when I went back to the city I felt better equipped to tolerate the CCTV.

The absence of CCTV cameras at Hampshire College has afforded me some peace of mind. I've also started using an operating system called TAILS that makes it much easier to avoid online surveillance. TAILS is a Linux kernel, the default browser in TAILS is Tor and the default office suite in TAILS is LibreOffice (an open-source office suite developed by a nonprofit called The Document Foundation). The default search engine in Tor is DuckDuckGo, which is much more respectful of privacy than Google. Thus, by using TAILS, I have managed to drastically reduce my reliance on the tech giants.

Unfortunately, I have not even come close to completely freeing myself from online surveillance, and that's because I am unlucky enough to live in a society where almost everyone uses Gmail, almost nobody questions the abusive privacy practices of the tech giants, and almost nobody uses more secure and private alternatives like Protonmail or Signal. Thus, my communications with other people aren't private, and this has prevented me from being fully at ease. Thus, I am writing this trilogy of articles in the hope that it will motivate both individual Hampshire students, faculty, and staff, as well as Hampshire College as an institution, to take steps to reduce their reliance on Big Tech. In the next article, I explain what Hampshire College as an institution can do to protect privacy and disrupt surveillance capitalism. In the article after that, I provide a simple step-by-step guide that students, faculty, and staff can use to reduce their reliance on tech giants.

How Hampshire can do more to respect and protect student privacy and disrupt surveillance capitalism

by Zain Salim

Given the government's track record of mass surveillance as well as the numerous partnerships and contracts that the tech giants have with the government's defense and intelligence agencies, it's unlikely that we can ever expect the US government of taking the necessary steps to rein in the tech giants. Thus, any effort to undermine the hegemony of the tech giants and disrupt corporate surveillance would have to be grassroots. But one of the reasons why it's so hard for individuals to divest from, let alone boycott tech giants such as Google and Facebook is that so many *institutions* utilize the services of these tech giants. For instance, students here at Hampshire *have* to use Gmail because student email accounts are provided by Google. Thus, grassroots efforts at disrupting Big Tech surveillance are far more likely to succeed if led by the companies, universities, and organizations that choose to utilize their services, rather than individuals who are compelled by their employers or schools or other commitments to use them. Thus, this article provides a roadmap for how Hampshire College-- particularly the IT department-- can lead the way in divesting from the tech giants.

Host more privacy-themed events and discussions

Here at Hampshire, we have classes, clubs, and ENGAGE days that engage with issues of racism, sexism, classism, homophobia, transphobia, ablism, reproductive justice, environmental sustainability, capitalism, and more. But there's no professor at Hampshire whose specific area of expertise is privacy (or a specific facet of the issue, such as facial recognition or privacy law or the economics of surveillance capitalism or even the mathematics of cryptography), nor any courses about, for instance, surveillance capitalism, nor any ENGAGE day centered around the issue of government and corporate surveillance. In short, here at Hampshire, surveillance doesn't seem to be an issue on people's radar-- or at least not a priority-- even though there is so much intersectionality between surveillance and all the other issues mentioned above, as some of the biggest targets of surveillance are people of color, women seeking abortions, undocumented im-

migrants, the LGBTQ community, and activists. So we need more events, clubs, and classes that discuss the issues of privacy and surveillance and aim to disrupt both the surveillance state and surveillance capitalism.

Hampshire College must stop using Gmail to provide email to students, and instead switch to Protonmail

It is well-known that Google scans the contents of all emails received and sent in Gmail and uses the contents to create personalized ads. It is also well-known that Google has a track record of being very obedient of government requests for user data. Additionally, emails sent via Gmail are not end-to-end encrypted, and so they can be intercepted. In short, Gmail provides no measure of privacy. Proton, by contrast, encrypts all emails; doesn't scan the contents of emails for advertising revenue or any other purpose (and in fact, could not even if it wanted to because of the end-to-end encryption); and, being based in Switzerland, only responds to requests for data from the Swiss government (and Switzerland has far stricter privacy laws than the US).

Like all the other suggestions here, this suggestion won't be easy. Hampshire's migration to Google is very recent, and I asked a technologist here at Hampshire about why Hampshire migrated to Google. She explained that by the time Hampshire chose to migrate to Google, all the other colleges in the consortium already had. And before the Five Colleges migrated to Google, each college had its own scheduling software and they weren't interoperable. So the main reason for Hampshire migrating to Google (and Hampshire was the last of the Five Colleges because lots of people here hated Google and were thus reluctant to make the migration) was so that everyone in the Five Colleges would have Google Calendar. If something as simple as the calendar software can be a challenge, then I'm sure there are even bigger challenges.

At the same time, I think that Gmail is the biggest threat to student privacy here at Hampshire College. It has certainly been the most uncomfortable aspect of my otherwise very positive experience here at Hampshire College. So I refuse to believe that we simply *cannot* find alternatives to Gmail. We must, no matter how hard it is.

Stop using Google Analytics on the college's website

If you read Hampshire College's digital privacy statement*, you'll find that hampshire.edu uses cookies and Google Analytics to track how visitors use their website. Hampshire College claims that this information is collected for the college's use only and not shared with or sold to third parties, but this isn't acceptable because most visitors to the website don't consent to it since they don't read the digital privacy statement. Moreover, Hampshire admits that it shares some user information as "hashed data in a privacy-friendly way with third parties, such as Google. This sharing is to measure the performance of advertisements issued by Hampshire College." However, "privacy-friendly" is not rigorously defined, nor is the hashing algorithm specified. Thus, I am not reassured by Hampshire's privacy statement. If Hampshire is unequivocally committed to protecting privacy, it should stop using Google Analytics on its website.

*https://www.hampshire.edu/hampshire-college-digital-privacy-statement

Hampshire College should delete all its existing social media pages (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok) as well as its YouTube channel. As an alternative social media platform it can use Mastodon and as an alternative video platform it can use Peertube.

Obviously, these social media platforms are an important way in which Hampshire College promotes and advertises itself, which is why I don't think Hampshire should quit these social media platforms overnight. But Hampshire should establish a timeline for gradually moving away from Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok-- for instance, doing so within the next 1-2 years. They could post an announcement on their Facebook page, for instance, saying, "we plan to stop using Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and TikTok within

the next year. Read more." The "read more" could be an embedded hyperlink to a statement on Hampshire's website explaining Hampshire's commitment to disrupting and divesting from surveillance capitalism.

At the same time that Hampshire announces its intent to migrate off of Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube, it could create accounts on Mastodon [1] and Peertube [2]. Mastodon is an open source and more privacy-friendly social media platform; Peertube is an open source and more privacy-friendly video platform. For a year, Hampshire would post the same things on both Facebook and Mastodon; on both YouTube and Peertube. After a year Hampshire would stop posting on Facebook and only post on Mastodon; similarly, stop uploading to YouTube and only uploading to Peertube. Hampshire could even keep its old Facebook page active but have the only thing there be a link to its Mastodon account.

I tried to search online for examples of other colleges and universities doing this, but couldn't find any. So it appears as though if Hampshire were to do what I'm recommending, it would be an unprecedented move for an institution of higher education. Thus, it would generate a lot of publicity which could perhaps even offset the loss of publicity that results from Hampshire not being on mainstream social media platforms. Not only that, but if Hampshire tries to divest from the tech giants then other colleges and universities could be inspired to do the same.

[1] https://joinmastodon.org/
[2] https://joinpeertube.org/

Think about the unique technological challenges of those who try to avoid online surveillance

Let me give two examples of what this entails. A few weeks ago, the Student Advocacy Board sent out a survey that was conducted using Qualtrics. Qualtrics doesn't work in Tor browser. Like many other websites, it blocks Tor IP addresses. Therefore, I wasn't able to take the Qualtrics survey.

Now, why wasn't I able to just use a normal browser to take the Qualtrics survey? Because I use an operating system called TAILS, in which Tor browser is the default browser and no other browsers work (because the goal is to create a system as secure and anonymous as possible by blocking applications that try to bypass Tor). Clearly, whoever designed the Qualtrics survey didn't do so with TAILS users in mind. While the Qualtrics survey itself wasn't such a big deal (in retrospect, I could have and should have done it from a computer in the library), it's indicative of a much larger issue: Web-based services are almost never designed with the privacy-conscious in mind.

To give another example, the EBSCO library service does not work in Tor browser. In fact, even in a normal browser, EBSCO doesn't work if cookies are blocked. And one has to consent to EBSCO's horrendous privacy policy in order to use it. Thus, placing online requests for books from other colleges is a privacy nightmare. Obviously, because the entire consortium uses EBSCO, Hampshire is not solely to blame for this problem and it would be extremely difficult for Hampshire to stop using EBSCO. But my point is that if the technologists across the Five Colleges had kept people like me in mind-- or if they themselves had cared more about online privacy-- then they might not have decided to adopt the EBSCO system.

It's easy for technologists to lose sight of people like me because Tor users are so rare. However, while people like me who actively try to avoid online surveillance are very rare, people who care about their privacy are not. I'd argue that nearly everybody cares about their privacy because nearly everybody uses curtains and blinds. So the acquiescence of the general population in the face of online surveillance should not be taken to mean that the general population doesn't care about privacy. Rather, it's a testament to the success that corporations and institutions in the US and around the world have had in abusing their power to trample over the privacy needs of individuals while simultaneously keeping them ignorant of it. And that's hardly an excuse for technologists to perpetuate this abuse of power by neglecting the privacy needs of the users of the services they develop.

Allow students to print documents anonymously, or, at the very least, without having to provide financial info.
Right now this is not possible because all students have to create a Papercut account in order to be able to print documents, and the Papercut account must be linked to a credit card. The solution is to instead allow us to pay with cash for printing or photocopying. I don't know exactly how such a system would be set up, but I'm sure there's a way. Another solution could be to allow us to use the Hampdollars loaded onto our ID cards to pay for printing and photocopying. While this obviously won't be anonymous, it would be more privacy-friendly than Papercut because we won't have to provide credit card info to a third party in order to print stuff. Logistically, enabling the use of Hampdollars to pay for printing shouldn't be too complicated given that Hampdollars can already be used to pay for purchases from Mixed Nuts or the Hampstore.

All campus phone numbers should be reachable via Signal, not just cellular service
Imagine if a student wishes to report a sexual assault to Campus Safety or discuss a health or emotional problem with Health and Counseling. The student, in such cases, may wish to keep their conversation confidential. A secure messaging app like Signal, which provides end-to-end encryption of phone calls, would go a long way towards ensuring that nobody-- not even the government-- can intercept the calls, and thereby ensuring true confidentiality.

There's no harm in also making other campus offices, such as Financial Aid and the Admissions Office, reachable via Signal; for even though confidentiality may not be strictly necessary in these cases, people may wish and should be able to keep their conversations with these offices private anyway. I certainly would. Essentially, any campus phone number should be reachable via Signal.

Recommendation to professors: Incorporate free and open-source (FOSS) software into your teaching.
This suggestion is especially relevant to math, data science, and computer science professors. Consider spreadsheets as an example. If you work with data and currently use Google Sheets or Microsoft Excel or Numbers, try out LibreOffice Calc instead and teach yourself how to use it. I doubt it will have *all* the features that Sheets and Excel have, but it will have the basic features needed for most everyday uses. Then, consider teaching your students how to analyze, integrate, and visualize data with LibreOffice Calc instead of Sheets or Excel or Numbers. If you're already familiar with one spreadsheet software, then it's understandably difficult to get used to a totally different spreadsheet software. However, that's exactly what perpetuates the dominance of Sheets and Excel-- people are comfortable with Sheets and Excel, so they keep using them. Professors play a crucial role in breaking this vicious cycle by training a new generation of students who are comfortable using LibreOffice Calc and go on to use that in the real world instead of Sheets or Excel.

Final thoughts: Why the fuss about Big Tech?
In the previous article, "surveillance horror stories", I told the story of my interrogation and expressed fears about government surveillance. However, the focus of my next two articles will be about how individuals and Hampshire College, respectively, can help subvert Big Tech. Why am I now shifting my focus to Big Tech, if my initial concern is about government surveillance?

The reason is that no matter how much the government wishes to surveil my online activity, it can't do so without the cooperation of the tech giants. As I wrote in "surveillance horror stories", the reason why I haven't been able to put the secondary screening behind me was because I was asked for my phone number and email address, information that could enable the government to continue to surveil me even though I've long since left the airport checkpoint. But this wouldn't be a concern if not for Google.

For instance, let's imagine that instead of giving a Gmail address I had given a Protonmail address (I doubt I would have been allowed to leave without giving *some* email address). Then I wouldn't have had to worry about the government reading my old emails because Proton would neither have been obliged to nor able to hand over those emails. If Hampshire used Protonmail instead of Gmail then I wouldn't have to worry about the government continuing to read my emails. Similarly, for most of my adolescence I was completely ignorant of online surveillance and thus innocently surfed the web all while logged in to my Gmail account. Thus, the government, if it has subpoenaed Google, would have access to years of my web-browsing history. I'm sure that some of my web-browsing habits are unique enough to identify me even when I'm using Tor, but they may not be linkable to my identity if not for Google's tracking of my web browsing history before I started using Tor or the omnipresence of Google Analytics across the internet.

Similarly, as the Snowden leaks revealed, Google, Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, and Yahoo all collaborated with the NSA's Prism program [1]. Google also has a contract with CBP [2] and was met with fierce resistance when it tried to sign a contract with the Pentagon [3].

And that is just a small part of why I am as outraged by corporate surveillance as I am by government surveillance, why I feel like corporations are a bigger threat to privacy and civil liberties than the government, and why I think that the best way to defeat government surveillance is to defeat corporate surveillance. And that is why I hope that Hampshire College will follow these recommendations. Because privacy is not a luxury or a wishful ideal. It's an absolute necessity for the peace and freedom of me and many others.

[1] https://www.theguardian.com/world/2013/jun/06/us-tech-giants-nsa-data
[2] https://theintercept.com/2020/10/21/google-cbp-border-contract-anduril/
[3] https://globalnews.ca/news/4125382/google-pentagon-ai-project-maven/

What you (as an individual) can do to move away from Big Tech
by Zain Salim

Now that I've explained some of the reasons (not nearly all the reasons) why I want everybody to divest from the tech giants, I am going to show you how to do so. Notice that I use the word "divest". It is nearly impossible to truly boycott [1] the tech giants because that would require refraining from visiting any websites that use Google Analytics and Amazon Web Services, which more than half [2] of websites do. But that gives you no excuse to not try to *divest* from them-- that is, take simple steps to reduce your reliance on them.

In this article, I won't provide advice on divesting from Meta or Amazon. Divesting from Meta is easy if you don't have Facebook, Instagram, or WhatsApp; if you do use these services, then quitting is probably a difficult thing to do. Similarly, Amazon is hard to boycott because lots of things available on Amazon aren't available on other websites (or aren't available as cheaply). Thus, the focus of this article will be on how to divest from Google, Apple, and Microsoft. The steps are arranged in order of convenience and difficulty. If you have 5 minutes, please do steps 1 and 2 right now (and don't even bother reading this whole article). If you have 20 minutes, please also do steps 3 and 4. If you have more than 20 minutes, consider following all the steps.

Disclaimer: This is not a privacy guide for the hardcore tech user. Following these steps won't completely shield you from online surveillance and it isn't nearly enough if your goal is to be the next Edward Snowden. If you're *really* passionate about avoiding online surveillance, then I recommend installing an operating system called TAILS [3] and making use of all its built-in features (Tor, Libreof-

fice, Thunderbird, Pidgin Internet Messenger, etc.). You should also read the Electronic Frontier Foundation's privacy guide Surveillance Self-Defense [4]. This article is simply intended to be a *starting point* for those looking to reduce their exposure to surveillance and their reliance on the tech giants; they are only what I feel are realistic for most students here.

1. https://gizmodo.com/i-cut-the-big-five-tech-giants-from-my-life-it-was-hel-1831304194
2. https://trends.builtwith.com/analytics/Google-Analytics
3. https://www.tails.boum.org/
4. https://ssd.eff.org/

Step 1: Switch to Brave browser (free, easy, 2 minutes)
Downloading Brave [1] makes it easy to kill *three* birds with one stone. First, you free yourself from browser tracking by Google, Apple, or Microsoft (depending on whether you previously used Chrome, Safari, or Edge). Brave blocks ads and web trackers. To reduce the risk of browser fingerprinting, it uses a technique called fingerprint randomization. And your browsing history isn't shared with third parties.

Second, you free yourself from Google search, because the default search engine is Brave Search (not Google).

Third, Brave provides a videoconferencing platform called Brave Talk, which can be used as an alternative to Zoom. This matters because Zoom's lack of respect for privacy is almost as egregious as that of Facebook and Google. Brave Talk does have an important limitation: You have to pay for a premium version to host a meeting with more than four participants. But there's no limit on the number or duration of free calls. And although you need to have Brave browser installed in order to *host* a meeting using Brave Talk, participants can join the meeting from any browser so you don't need to worry about whether they have Brave. So for one-on-one or small-group meetings, I'd highly recommend it.

You can download Brave on both your computer and your phone.

[1] https://brave.com/download
[2] https://brave.com/talk
[3] https://explore.zoom.us/en/privacy/

Step 2: Download the Startpage browser extension (free, easy, 2 mins.)
Brave Search is a good search engine that respects your privacy. But if you want an even better search engine, use **Startpage** [1]. Another good search engine is **DuckDuckGo** [2], but I prefer Startpage because it has a proxy feature which enables you to browse websites anonymously. I use **Tor Browser** [3], which provides even better anonymity than a Startpage proxy (but is annoying to use due to its slowness unless you're really concerned about privacy), but because some websites blacklist Tor IP addresses I still find the Startpage proxy helpful sometimes.

[1] https://startpage.com
[2] https://duckduckgo.com/
[3] https://www.torproject.org/

Step 3: For anonymous, ad-free streaming and downloading of YouTube videos, download Newpipe (if you have an Android phone) or Freetube (for your computer or non-Android phone) (free, easy 2 mins.).
Any video that's available on YouTube can be searched for, viewed, and downloaded for free using Freetube [1] or Newpipe [2]. There are only two things you can't do with these apps: You can't upload videos to and you can't like/dislike/comment on videos (those two things can only be done directly through YouTube). However, the list of things you can do with Newpipe or Freetube is much longer: You can create playlists, download videos (for free), subscribe to YouTube channels, read the comments, and basically anything else that you *can* do with YouTube. And to reiterate, there are no ads!

[1] https://www.freetubeapp.io/
[2] https://www.newpipe.net/

Step 4: For messaging, switch to Signal (free, easy, 5 mins.)
This recommendation would probably draw the most scrutiny from privacy experts (disclaimer: I'm not an expert). The **Electronic Frontier Foundation** (EFF) [1], a leading privacy organization, **argues** [2] that "no single communication app can perfectly meet everyone's security and communication needs" and notes several drawbacks to both **Signal** [3] and WhatsApp. But the reason why I prefer Signal to WhatsApp (even though both employ end-to-end encryption) is that it was made by a nonprofit (not a tech giant) and collects less **metadata** [4] than WhatsApp does (as the same EFF article mentions). One of the drawbacks of Signal that the EFF mentions is that very few people use Signal and you can't use a messaging app to communicate with other people who don't have it. But that's all the more reason why *every* Hampshire student should download Signal *right now*. That way any two Hampshire students can communicate over Signal.

[1] https://www.eff.org/
[2] https://www.eff.org/deeplinks/2018/03/why-we-cant-give-you-recommendation
[3] https://www.signal.org/
[4] https://www.whatsapp.com/legal/privacy-policy/ (the privacy policy is long; to see what metadata it collects, read only the paragraphs "usage and log information," "device and connection information," and "location information")

Step 5: Switch from Gmail and Google Calendar to ProtonMail and Proton Calendar (free, moderately difficult, 5 mins.)
Creating a **ProtonMail** [1] account is as easy as creating a Gmail account-- in fact, even easier because unlike Gmail, Proton doesn't require you to give a phone number in order to create an account (though it does allow you to, for optional two-factor authentication or as a recovery method if you forget your password). The reason why I rate this as "moderately difficult" is because of the following challenges:

1). Who wants to check multiple email accounts?
2). Emails to non-Proton users are not end-to-end encrypted by default.

Having said that, there are easy solutions to these problems. Proton has a mobile app, so you can check your ProtonMail from your phone wherever and whenever you want. So, to make it easier to check your ProtonMail you can download the mobile app. Second, you can program emails from your old email address to be forwarded to your ProtonMail account. Third, you can tell your contacts to start sending emails to your Protonmail address instead of your old email address. Fourth, you can give yourself incentives to check your ProtonMail. For example, Proton also offers a calendar service called Proton Calendar. So if you currently use Google Calendar to set reminders, you can instead switch to Proton Calendar. That will give you more reasons to check your ProtonMail.

Now, if you send an email from a Proton address to, for instance, a Gmail or an Outlook or a Tutanota or any non-Proton address, then it won't be end-to-end encrypted by default. But there's a way to

make the email encrypted. You can password-protect the email and then communicate the password to the recipient either in person or via some secure messaging app such as Signal (which you will already have if you're following this guide step-by-step). Obviously, this has limitations. If you have no way of securely telling the recipient the password to your email, then it's useless. But don't let this deter you from creating a Proton account. Instead, this is all the more reason why you should not only create one yourself but also encourage everyone you know to join Protonmail.

It's also worth noting that Proton only allows 500 MB of free storage total. If you import thousands of old emails, you'll definitely exceed this limit. A premium version of Proton, which allows up to 15 GB of storage (the same amount that Google allows for free) costs $6.99 per month. However, the premium version also comes with a VPN.

[1] https://www.proton.me

Step 6: For encrypted cloud storage, switch to MEGA (free, moderately difficult, 5 mins.), or Proton Drive (easy, 0 mins., free for <500 MB but $ for more).
Creating a MEGA [1] account is not difficult unto itself. But I anticipate that *using* MEGA will be moderately inconvenient because most of us are used to Google or Microsoft, where the email service is paired with the cloud storage service. That's why, if you want convenience, then it's better to use Proton Drive because when you sign up for Proton Mail you automatically get Proton Drive. However, you get only 500 MB of Proton Drive storage with the free version; a paid version granting 15 GB of storage costs $6.99 per month (to reiterate, though, you also get a VPN). MEGA, by comparison, offers 20 GB of free storage. Even Google only offers 15 GB of storage for free so if you haven't had to pay for additional Google Drive storage then you won't need to pay for additional MEGA storage.

[1] https://www.mega.io/

Step 7: Switch from Google Docs to LibreOffice (free, difficult, unknown amount of time)
LibreOffice [1] is a free and open source office suite developed by The Document Foundation [2] that includes LibreOffice Writer (for typing documents; analogous to Docs or Word or Pages); LibreOffice Impress (for making presentations; analogous to Powerpoint or Google Slides); LibreOffice Calc (for making spreadsheets; analogous to Sheets or Excel or Numbers); and LibreOffice Draw (for drawing stuff). Now, if you download LibreOffice from libreoffice.org, you'll be able to make and edit documents, presentations, and spreadsheets even when you're offline, but you *won't* be able to store them in the cloud or collaborate with others in real time. Thus, if you want to do these two things, a better idea would be to make an account for Collabora Online [3]. Collabora Online is a collaborative real-time editor (like Google Docs) that uses LibreOffice software (the great thing about free and open source software is that anyone can build on it).

The difficulties in transitioning from Google Docs to Collabora Online is obvious. If you have a lot of Google Docs that you're currently working on, then I'm sure it would be hard to immediately switch to Collabora Online. Moreover, the people you collaborate with would also have to have Collabora Online accounts. So I don't expect anyone to make the transition overnight, but it's worth doing gradually.

[1] https://www.libreoffice.org
[2] https://www.documentfoundation.org/
[3] https://www.collaboraoffice.com/

Conclusion: What's the point?
None of the things that I've recommended here will make a dent in the profits of Google, Apple, and Microsoft, so why bother taking these steps? Several reasons.

0. Really, you didn't do steps 1 and 2? That would have taken less time than reading this article!
1. I have not communicated electronically with a single student at Hampshire College this year except when collaborating on group assignments for classes or extracurriculars, and that's because I do not feel comfortable having casual conversations with anyone over Gmail or regular messaging. I think that has had a detrimental impact on my social life at Hampshire. If more Hampshire students had Signal, I'd feel much more comfortable giving them my phone number and texting and calling them.
2. Don't assume that just because your friends have never insisted on using more secure and private methods of communication that they're not bothered by surveillance. Chances are that some people you know *are* bothered by surveillance but have never spoken up about it for fear of being ridiculed or being excluded from vital social networks. Just because I'm one of the few people willing to sacrifice his social life to avoid surveillance does not mean I'm the only one who hates surveillance!
3. The silver lining of the tech giants' surveillance is that it allows them to notice trends. I remember a few years ago, I stopped using Google's search engine and started using Ecosia instead. Evidently, Google noticed, because shortly thereafter, I began receiving YouTube ads for Google's search engine. I had never before seen such ads, and it wouldn't have been profitable for Google to serve those ads while I was using its search engine. Even when I started using Ecosia, I doubt that I made a dent in Google's profits, so why did Google start serving me ads for its search engine? My guess is as follows: because it is so rare for people to deviate from the mainstream tech giant offerings in even the smallest way, Google felt extremely threatened by even as subtle an act of "resistance" as me switching to Ecosia (and mind you, at the time I had switched to Ecosia not out of hatred of Google, but rather out of a desire to see the ad revenue generated from my searches be used to plant trees). In short: **the tech giants have a very strong bottom line but a very fragile ego. Therein lies their weakness, and therein lies the value of taking even the most trivial steps (such as changing your search engine) to reduce your reliance on them.**

P.S. If you made a Protonmail account, feel free to email me at zsa21@protonmail.com and share your questions, your thoughts about these articles, about privacy and surveillance, any surveillance horror stories of your own (if you're comfortable sharing them with me), and anything else you want to talk about.

The Re-Remaking of a College, Chapter 5:
How to Contract Other Relationship
and Other Forms of Direct Action
by Jay Poggi & Ethan Ludwin-Peery

"The state is not something which can be destroyed by a revolution, but is a condition, a certain relationship between human beings, a mode of human behaviour; we destroy it by contracting other relationships, by behaving differently."
— Gustav Landauer

Ethan first introduced me to this quote while I was planning *The Re-Remaking of a College Chapter 4*. In a Google Doc with the soul of a conspiracy board, I was attempting to untangle the sticky web of emotions that lead to Hampshire students' particular brand of resentment. Under one especially icky thread, I'd written, "Hampshire students just don't have the resources to organize and maintain effective movements that could bring about meaningful change while also fulfilling their academic responsibilities and taking care of themselves." Ethan left a comment and shared two quotes: the first was the above Landauer quote; the second was from *Speed Racer (2008)*:

Speed : Racing hasn't changed, and it never will.

Racer X : It doesn't matter if racing never changes. What matters is if we let racing change us.

An epiphany bonked me square in the noggin. "Man," I said, "I really need to see Speed Racer, huh."
"YES" said Ethan.
Half a page later, in a section on changes the school could make to prevent such widespread resentment, I wrote, "give students ways of contributing to school policy as part of their academics. Make a class modeled after the supported project seminar but specifically for addressing systemic issues at Hamp."

"I'm not sure," said Ethan in another comment. "I shared the Landauer quote before because I think rules and regulations don't matter much, because rules are always second to the will of the people who administer and enforce the rules. So to me, systemic change doesn't look like changing policies, it comes from treating ourselves and each other better, 'contracting other relationships,' figuring out our values and living in accordance with them. If these things happen in a widespread way, the policies at some level no longer matter."

Systemic change doesn't look like changing policies. The little game designer that occupies the cavity in my skull where most people have a brain turned into a restless, fidgety mess trying to come to grips with the foreign concept of fixing a broken system without rewriting its rules. After several long conversations with Ethan over Docs comments, Discord, and in person, it finally clicked when I remembered the demented way my sister and I used to play *Super Smash Bros*. together. *Smash* is a fighting game with rules (if you fall off the stage, you die; if you hit opponents, you'll knock them back) and a goal (be the last fighter standing), but our five- and seven-year-old selves were oblivious to these. When we played *Smash*, we used it as a medium for our own made-up "games," like "Yoshi Sibling Adventure" and "Pikachu Sibling Adventure."[1] We didn't need to rewrite a single line of *Smash*'s code to do this; we just chose to follow different rules.

(Ethan: A similar example comes from my friend group, where we have a Smash game called "Ganon Chess", the rules of which are: 1. Everyone must play as Ganondorf. 2. Must be played on the custom stage "Tootie Pootis"[2] . 3. Three stock per round, 500 rounds.)

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1 I'm noticing a theme
2 Tootie Pootis was originally developed as an experimental stage with the minimal number of platforms, but it is so much more than that.
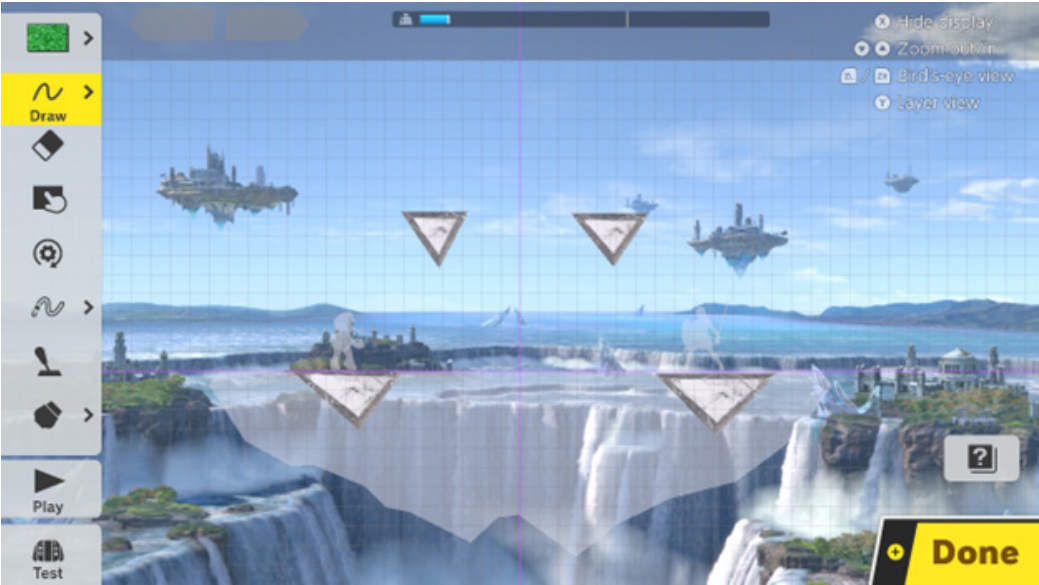
Fig. 1: Regulation specs for "Tootie Pootis"

We can make change at Hampshire in the same way—rather than trying to convince the system of the school to alter itself to meet our needs, we can meet those needs ourselves by acting outside of it, and even creating our own systems. Activists call this "direct action," and contrast it with advocacy, which appeals to authority figures or other outside forces.

In this essay, Ethan and I are going to offer some ideas of how direct action could help us improve Hampshire.[3] To start, we'll talk about what Landauer calls "contracting other relationships" and ask how students, staff, and faculty can redefine how they interact outside of the roles that are typically expected of them. Then, we'll serve up a smorgasbord of miscellaneous suggestions for ways in which we can act outside of existing systems and establish new ones.

Contracting Other Relationships
To break out of any given system's "status quo," we have to understand the roles it expects of and imposes on the people in it. Let's call these system-defined roles "default roles." A school's default roles are "student" and "teacher."

From our first day in kindergarten, schools teach us to think of students snd teachers as separate species. Teachers set the rules, and students follow them. Students break the rules, and teachers punish them. While I don't agree with this authoritarian model for looking after young children, I do understand it. Frankly, little kids are stupid. They haven't sufficiently internalized the laws of physics and chemistry to be able to accurately assess the danger of jumping off a piece of playground equipment or eating a fistfull of mud. It makes sense that adults, who have internalized these laws, should be "in charge."

But it bamboozles me to my bones that as we grow up, as we learn to think and care for ourselves, this student/teacher dynamic doesn't get any more democratic—in a lot of ways, it only gets more authoritarian. A kindergartener is at least allowed to sit in the driver's seat of their learning-car during recess and other unstructured playtimes, but a high school student typically spends their days quadruple-strapped into a baby seat in the back row. As we get older, learning stops being something we do, and becomes something that is done *to* us *by* our teachers.

Of course, things are different at Hampshire... in theory. Hampshire's policies establish a considerably more democratic student/teacher dynamic than other schools, but most of us (students snd teachers) have had the authoritarian dynamic so relentlessly drilled into our skulls by our pre-Hampshire lives that we allow it to rule us here too.

Outside Hampshire, the default role of students tends to be defined by three qualities: **passivity, subordination, and solitude**.

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3 We're choosing to focus solely on direct action as opposed to advocacy because 1) the activism we learn about in school tends to be almost exclusively advocacy, leading us to see it as the only option, and 2) this is only one essay and we only have so much time.

Passivity: Students don't learn, they are taught. They gain knowledge by absorbing information and following instruction as opposed to designing their own projects and experiments, doing their own research, or otherwise indulging their intrinsic curiosity.

Subordination: Students do what the teacher says. Teachers manage their behavior by dealing out rewards and punishments (e.g. good and bad grades). Coming up with their own way of doing things is forbidden, as it undermines the teacher's authority.

Solitude: Students are many, but they are alone. In a class of fifty students, each is seeking nothing more than their own individual success. Communication between students is not permitted outside rare, teacher-sanctioned discussions and group activities.

On the other hand, the default role of faculty is defined by features including **authority, aloofness, and gatekeeping**. Ethan offered these descriptions along with the following comments:

Authority: The professor is always right, never wrong, doesn't make mistakes. This is untrue and not educational (being wrong and discussing the limits of understanding is VERY educational) and puts professors under a lot of stress to never slip up. I contract a different relationship in part by highlighting the limits of my understanding.

Aloofness: Professors are expected not to want anything of students. This sounds good until you realize that "not wanting" also means "not valuing". If you value something you genuinely want it for selfish reasons, you want it to happen, you are harmed, in a sense, if it doesn't happen. Perhaps most importantly, if you genuinely want something from someone, if it doesn't happen. Perhaps most importantly, if you genuinely want something from someone, you put yourself in the other person's power, you are vulnerable. So I try to only ask students for things that I would genuinely want from them; this communicates that I value their work and also puts me in their power. It's hard to establish trust or any kind of rapport without this. Jay is a good example; he's a good writer and I genuinely value his edits on my writing.

Gatekeeping: Most faculty feel an obligation to track down cheaters, enforce attendance, and generally sort the "deserving" from the "undeserving". This also puts a lot of stress on faculty because we don't have enough power to be able to make this happen, even if we wanted to. This is in contrast to, for example, how the machine shop works — it has open hours and anyone with training can come and use the tools and get advice and grow in their skill, but if you stop showing up, no one will hunt you down.

You'll notice that I emphasize how unpleasant these roles are for faculty; this makes them worse teachers, which in turn makes the student experience worse; I think it is in their interests to contract other kinds of relationships as well.

It's easy to see how, when students and teachers act according to these roles, they end up forming relationships that are impersonal, mutually suspicious, and sometimes downright antagonistic—the exact opposite of what a relationship founded on "learning" should look like.

The student/teacher dynamic isn't the only one that these default roles screw up; the **solitary** nature of the student role makes it harder for us to form meaningful connections with each other as well. Some Hampshire faculty recognize this and go out of their way to deprogram our internalized isolationism—I've heard from my writer-friends that workshop classes, for instance, can do a great job of building community among their students. But in classes that aren't deliberately designed to encourage camaraderie, students can go the entire semester without making a single friend. We might spend hours every week in the same space as other students with similar values and interests, we might exchange ideas and contribute to each other's learning through professor-facilitated discussions, but without anything to disrupt the core assumptions of our default role, we'll leave each class not as classmates, but as strangers.

The default roles for students and professors lead to relationships that are at best shallow and at worst destructive. Our pre-Hampshire lives teach us that these are the only kinds of relationships that are possible at school. But they aren't. We can define new roles for ourselves and establish more fulfilling ways of interacting with our professors and each other—we can "contract other relationships."

Once we understand that the default dynamics aren't working for us, we have to ask ourselves what kind of relationships we *do* want with our professors and fellow students. What do they have to offer that their default roles prevent them from giving? What do we have to offer in return? When we've answered these questions, we can propose a new kind of relationship.

I've realized that from my professors, I want mentorship. To me, that means personalized guidance, consistent feedback, and support through the most challenging parts of learning. I've never straight up asked a professor to be my mentor (I bet some would be receptive to this—you'll have to vibe it out); instead, I've built these relationships by staying after class to ask questions out of genuine curiosity, proposing ideas for independent studies, and asking for help when I'm struggling rather than just requesting an extension and continuing to struggle alone. I've found that for most professors, the most valuable thing I have to offer is honest, consistent communication. Giving that freely has gone a long way toward me earning their trust. I'm sure not every professor will be willing to contract other kinds of relationships in this way, but in my experience (and Ethan's), most will jump at the chance to interact more meaningfully with their students.

I feel much weirder talking about my experience contracting other relationships with my fellow students. On the one hand, I've met some of my best friends here, and the way I relate to them could certainly qualify as a disruption to the "default" friend/friend dynamic imposed on us by broader American society. I've also found new kinds of student/student relationships in The Omen, like the civic-duty-based editor/submitter dynamic, or the mentorship-based editor/editor-in-training one. Still, I haven't found a reliable way to dismantle the solitude of the default student role that separates myself and my classmates from each other. I've definitely dismantled that solitude with my friends, but my pathologically introverted self doesn't have the energy to make friends with every one of my classmates. I do have an idea for how we could change Hampshire's default student role to one based on solidarity, which I'll get into a bit later.

Professors can also contract other relationships by asking themselves what they want from their students (and from each other) and what they are willing to give. They already expect and give quite a lot, but they may not be asking for or giving the things they really value.

Ultimately, Ethan and I have a limited ability to give specific advice on *how* to contract other relationships, because no two students or professors are going to want to contract exactly the same kind of relationship. Still, we hope these examples have proved the possibility of rejecting your default role and creating your own.

Besides giving us more fulfilling ways of interacting with our fellow Hampshire denizens, contracting other relationships helps to prepare us for other forms of direct action.

The Smorgasbord: More Ideas for Direct Action

"Good government never depends upon laws, but upon the personal qualities of those who govern. The machinery of government is always subordinate to the will of those who administer that machinery."
    — Frank Herbert

Discords for Courses
In my last essay, I brought up the possibility of each class having its own student-run Discord server as a way to build community among classmates. I think this could be a great way to ensure that, regardless of how the professor ever designs the class, students always have tools for contracting new relationships with each other. I saw this in practice last semester, when I took a class that probably would have allowed its students to remain in their comfortable, self-isolating default roles if one student hadn't started a Discord server. With a comfortable online communication platform, our out-of-class time actually made us feel more connected rather than turning us into strangers. We shared our work, got clarification on assignments, and planned meet-ups. Late in the semester, when we were struggling with finals, we were able to support each other in asking the professor for support.

I think we should make this standard across all classes. We start by collectively assuming responsibility over making sure every class we take has a Discord server. This means that if we get to the end of the first day of class and no one has brought up making a server, we just make the thing ourselves and invite everyone. In a hypothetical world in which every student has read this essay and agrees with this idea, some classes might end up being bombarded with invites to five different Discords; but I think a little messiness is healthy at the beginning of a cultural shift like this (and I'd rather have a few too many Discords at first than none at all). Over time, I imagine some kind of structure would solidify out of the chaos. Right now, I think the ideal version of that structure would look like this:

If a class has a TA, **the TA creates and manages the Discord server**. If there's no TA, it's the responsibility of whichever student or group of students jumps on it first.

Whoever creates the Discord server sends an invite to everyone in the class, **including the professor**. Interacting with your professors on a platform like Discord can be a great way of starting to contract a new kind of relationship with them. Compared to something like email which organizes communication into neat little packages of permission/approval or apology/forgiveness, Discord encourages spontaneous, loose, democratic exchanges. Also GIFs.

Still, each server should probably **reserve a couple of student-only channels**. Not all students are going to feel comfortable breaking out of the default student/teacher dynamic right away, nor are all professors. Student-only channels could allow students who are nervous about asking the professor for support to get help from their classmates. They could also serve as spaces to organize should the students need to take action against a professor who's causing harm.

Ethan points out that there are some downsides to having one server for each course, however:

First of all, that's a lot of servers; having to navigate a whole new set of servers at the start of each semester could quickly become confusing and exhausting. So another way to do this would be to have **larger servers that span multiple classes**. I'm doing this right now — there is a single server for both of my classes, administered by my TAs, with different roles and channels for each class. It works pretty well, and we may just keep this same server going for my classes next semester. You could also have servers that **build community across the entire study body**, by organizing them at a higher level, like at the level of the schools of thought. You could have one server each for Cognitive Science, Humanities / Arts / Cultural Studies, Critical Social Inquiry, Natural Science, and Interdisciplinary Arts, with roles and channels organized around different classes. Since my courses are a significant portion of the CS classes, something like this already exists for the school of Cognitive Science. These servers could be run by the Div IIIs in each school of thought (e.g. the NS Div IIIs collectively running the NS server); servers should be student-controlled, but it makes sense to have these larger servers run by students who have the most experience.

It's probably impossible to say what the best organizational method is at this point; we'll only figure that out through ~~PLAYTESTING~~ making and using Discord servers and watching how their organization affects the way students interact. Getting this idea to work will require a lot of flexibility, which is why **these servers absolutely need to be run independently by students**, rather than by staff, faculty, or some institutionalized committee. Leaving the creation and maintenance of academic Discord servers to students will ensure that they aren't used for surveillance, that they actually meet students' needs, and that they're able to adapt quickly as those needs change. After all, Discord might be the most popular platform now, but as Ethan points out, five years ago it would have been Slack, and ten years ago it would have been Facebook groups. Who knows what we'll be using in another five years?

Hampshire Community Surveys
I feel like there's a kind of enormous communication gap between students and the administration. Students never really have any idea what the administration is planning or working on, and the administration doesn't have many ways to collect student feedback. The community could really do with some kind of regular survey to measure student opinion on everything from course offerings to divisional requirements to dining services. I think the administration knows this and probably would like to regularly poll the students on various issues, but there's a problem:

No matter how much they insist they're only trying to "gather information," an admin-sponsored survey is going to feel like a "vote" to the students. This could be a really dangerous message to communicate if the issue they're trying to gather opinions on is something like COVID policy, which should definitely not just be put to a vote. Still, it would be a shame to deny our community so much valuable information, so we students could put ourselves in charge of conducting regular surveys.

Student-run surveys can provide the same information, but without implying that the most popular opinions will become our new policies. Results could still be used to influence decisions—students could use data from these surveys to make their advocacy more persuasive. It might be easier to convince the administration to, say, offer more project-based classes if you could show that 80% of students want to take such classes.

The other advantage of students running surveys themselves is that we would get to decide which questions to ask. Even the most well-intentioned administration survey wouldn't give them a complete picture of the student experience, because it was designed by someone who doesn't live every day as a Hampshire College student. They don't know what issues are most relevant to us. By writing our own surveys, we would be giving the administration information that they don't even know they need. I for one would love to find out how other students feel about their workloads, what they feel they're getting out of their class time, and if anyone knows what the Learning Collaboratives are.

The trouble with surveys, as anyone who's run one can tell you, is that getting people to fill them out is a persistent pain in the posterior. Having some kind of "incentive" could go a long way to making sure people don't just glaze over the survey in their inbox, so it might make sense for the students conducting these polls to do so through a registered student group. This would give them access to resources they could use to, say, throw "poll parties," where students fill out the surveys, and then indulge in SAF-funded food and entertainment. My inside sources tell me Student Engagement is considering making it possible for students to request funding for prizes next year, so this group might even be able to offer gift cards and the like to a select few lucky responders.

Surveys could be conducted through a new student group or a current one, maybe even The Omen. I'm about to step down as co-editor to focus on my Div III, though, so it'll have to be up to the Omenites of the future.

Get Involved in Faculty Searches
Hampshire will be hiring A LOT of faculty in the next couple years, and you (students) have many opportunities to influence who we hire. Who we hire as faculty has a profound ripple effect, impacting what classes are offered, what kinds of students come to Hampshire, what policies we adopt, and what our culture looks like as a school.

The good news is that influencing these hiring decisions is quite easy:

Join a faculty search committee. Be a part of looking at applications, talking to candidates, and deciding who comes to give a job talk. You can do this by reaching out to the faculty chair of the search committee and asking to be a part of the search. If you don't know who the chair is, you can write to the Dean of Faculty Office at dof@hampshire.edu to ask for the name of the search committee chair and express interest in serving on a given search.

Go to job talks. Listen to what they say, how they give a presentation, what they say they will teach. Ask complicated questions, challenge something they say. How do they respond when a student disagrees with them?

Give feedback! Give official feedback, of course (they send out feedback forms after job talks), but also 1) talk to the faculty who are on the job search committee, and 2) talk to the academic deans and the dean of faculty. Especially if you feel strongly about a candidate (either for or against them), go right to the people who will be making the hiring decision and express your concerns and/or elation.

These are the "official" ways you can have an influence. But unofficial methods may be even more powerful.

The most powerful thing you can probably do is **influence who applies to a job posting in the first place.** I'll use the recent Animation job posting as an example. In February when the animation job posting went up (you can find all current job postings at jobs.hampshire.edu), you could have sent out emails to your favorite anima-

tors and encouraged them to apply.

Perhaps you are a long-time fan of Worthikids, or Felix Colgrave (who you may know from DOUBLE KING). A simple email like, "Hi Ian, I'm a big fan of your work; my college has an opening for an animation professor job and I would love it if you would consider coming and teaching us what you know," could have a big effect. In principle, there's no reason you couldn't email Toby Fox and encourage him to apply the next time Hampshire's hiring for a game design position. You might be surprised at how moving it could be to hear from students directly.

There are basically two ways to do this. The first is to simply email your favorite people and ask them to come teach here, especially if they have a terminal degree (this will matter less for things like animation, because most animators don't have a PhD so it isn't a requirement for the job search).

But sometimes your favorite people won't be in a position to come and teach at Hampshire. They may already have a stable job, they may already be making more than Hampshire can pay them, or there may be other obstacles. In general, the most likely people to take any teaching job will be newly-minted PhDs (as I was when I took this job), and you probably don't know many of those. In this case, you should still email your favorite people, you should just ask them for recommendations instead.

For example, let's imagine that next year Hampshire is hiring for a linguistics position. I don't know any linguists who are about to finish their PhDs and go job hunting. But I am fond of the work of linguist Gretchen McCulloch (who wrote *Because Internet*, a nonfiction book on internet linguistics), so I would email her and ask if she knows anyone who would be interested in this job. My bet is that she would make some great recommendations. For any other field we're hiring in, I would think about who could make the best recommendations in whatever field we're hiring for. You can try to recruit whoever you want.

A final option is to look back through the list of recent Hampshire graduates and see if you can find anyone who is about to finish a terminal degree in a related field. You know they'll be looking for a job soon, and they might be happy to come back to the college.

All students should try to be a part of the faculty searches, but this seems like an especially good idea for first and second years, since anyone we hire now could very well end up teaching you before you graduate. Think about who you want to learn from and see what you can do to hire exactly that person.

Form Independent Committees

In the 1830s, Alexis de Tocqueville, a French visitor to the U.S., wrote that "in America, there is nothing the human will despairs of attaining through the free action of the combined powers of individuals. … Should an obstacle appear on the public highway and the passage of traffic is halted, neighbors at once form a group to consider the matter; from this improvised assembly an executive authority appears to remedy the inconvenience before anyone has thought of the possibility of some other authority already in existence before the one they have just formed." (See here for more exploration.)

America has become much more authoritarian since the 1830s, but this spirit is still alive for anyone who wants it. If you see a problem or an opportunity, you can always just get together with your community and start figuring out what to do about it. If no one is taking responsibility, and you don't expect the school or anyone else will contest your power, you can always take responsibility yourself. Here are some examples.

The Dakin and Merrill kitchens are a great resource, but are also notoriously a mess. Students could easily form **Dakin and/or Merrill Kitchen Committees** to keep these spaces clean and organized. Any student might find a couple friends and declare themselves president of the committee, with their friends as founding members, and come up with a plan to take care of the spaces. As long as you're not territorial about it, we doubt anyone will complain. If two students happen to declare this at the same time, they can team up. The worst case scenario is that we would end up with two committees both taking care of the space and keeping it clean. What a nightmare.

If one of these committees were successful, it might be able to support itself by accepting tips from grateful students. While committee members would probably be volunteers, there would still be some costs involved from purchasing cleaning supplies or new pots and pans, and donations could help cover that.

If the school is wise, they will give any successful committee official recognition and some institutional support. For example, the director of residence life might give a successful Dakin Kitchen Committee keys to the locked cabinets in the Dakin kitchen, a small budget for cleaning supplies, and maybe even a stipend in recognition of their hard work. We wouldn't bank on the school being wise in this way, but it's a nice thought.

The Prescott Tavern is a great space that is not used as much as it could be. How about forming a **Prescott Tavern Live Music Committee** and arrange for live music or open mics every Thursday night in the Tavern? Or if that's too small, what about a **Campus Live Music Committee** to arrange for students to do shows in spaces all over campus? Or maybe you think that Hampshire doesn't produce enough successful bands; what about a **Hampshire Band Accelerator Committee** or a **Hampshire Music Recording Label Committee** that can help drummers find guitarists and singers find bassists, help student artists pair with student sound engineers and producers, and set up recording spaces around campus so student bands can put together tracks, LPs, and albums?

I hear that the mods don't have enough furniture. And in general, a lot of the furniture around campus is getting a little crummy. So why not form the **Hampshire Free Craigslist Furniture Committee**? You could set up Craigslist alerts so that you get an email any time there's a local Craigslist posting for a free (or below some threshold; $10?) piece of furniture. When there are pieces that look like they're in decent shape, you can go pick them up with a truck (maybe borrowed from the farm?) and Hampshire gets new couches, tables, pianos, etc. etc. Put the best stuff in your mod; put it in your friend's mod. The pool table in the Prescott Tavern is a little rough — maybe you can find us a new one. Make the **Hampshire Upholstery and Repair Committee** to repair and refurbish the furniture we already have. Furniture isn't the only thing that goes up on Craigslist for free — collect and distribute free guitars, bikes, paint, posters, treadmills, binoculars, books, etc. etc. among the students.

Or why not form **Rat Patrol**, the name in my head for an unofficial student committee that goes around fixing things on campus (don't try to fix the elevators though, please leave that kind of thing to the professionals).

Start a Small Business

Some ideas for direct action will be easy to organize as a committee, and can be run with volunteers. But there will be other ideas that make more sense to organize as a business.

For example, imagine that there is a late-night cookie delivery business that runs out of Northampton and delivers cookies to Hampshire for $10 a cookie. Lots of Hampshire students are already buying these cookies and are happily paying $10 a pop. But this seems a little expensive, and the wait times are pretty long, since the cookies are coming all the way from Northampton.

You sit down and do the math and calculate that you could sell similar cookies for only $7 a cookie, and that this would be enough to pay you, a cook, and a delivery runner each $15 an hour. So you start a small business, hire two other students as a cook and a delivery runner, and start selling cookies. Hampshire students are happy to save $3 on a cookie and to get it faster, and most of them start ordering from you, instead of from the place in Northampton. You and your two student employees now have well-paying jobs and Hampshire campus saves $3 a cookie; everyone comes out on top. (Economist Jane Jacobs calls this "import replacement", and says that this is the main way economies get bigger.)

You wouldn't want to run this as a volunteer service — even if you were willing to bake cookies for free, someone still has to pay for the flour, sugar, and other ingredients. It makes the most sense to run this as a business, so that you can get money to buy more ingredients, and to pay you and any employees a reasonable wage. It also gives you a job working directly for the community, instead of having to get a job at Wal-Mart.

Any service with major costs involved would make more sense to organize as a business. So would any service that students want, are willing to pay for, or are already paying someone else for. If you can offer the same thing faster, cheaper, or at different hours, so much the better. Ask yourself what you would pay for, and what your friends would pay for, and if you would be interested in making it happen.

This may sound outlandish, but in fact it has already happened. When I (Ethan) was a student, we had The Night Truck[4]. This was a food truck that parked out back behind the Dakin loading dock late at night (something like 9pm to 2am; I forget the exact hours) and served mozzarella sticks and other greasy foods to drunken and/or eepy students. This was a real, registered food truck business that was also someone's entrepreneurship Div II. They turned some kind of real profit on it and all the employees were other students; several of my friends worked there.

As far as I can tell, the Night Truck kept operating until 2016, when they discovered water damage during some repairs. I think that they weren't able to raise enough money to fix this damage and had to close; you can find more information here[5] and here[6].

The Night Truck worked because it filled an important niche. Students are happy to pay for food and there are no other food options on campus that stay open until 2am. This meant they could cover an opening that Saga and the Bridge left empty, without even competing, and everyone came out on top.

I suspect there are many similar opportunities lying around out there for someone to notice. So bring back the Night Truck, or do your own version, or find a different way to make some money while serving your community. Just keep your eyes peeled.

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4 https://tinyurl.com/NightTruck
5 https://www.gazettenet.com/The-Night-Truck-at-Hampshire-College-needs-help-9265055
6 https://hampshirehowler.wordpress.com/2017/04/21/the-night-truck-an-icon-attempts-a-comeback/

sayonara you weeaboo shits
by Leo Zhang

Well. It's here, folks. The last issue of The Omen that I'll be editing in my official capacity as co-editor.

For those of you who don't know, I'm leaving my position as co-editor along with Jay. In my case, it's because I'll be abroad (in Japan!) next fall, so... Obviously, I wouldn't be able to do any signer activities, much less any editor activities. I'm basically retiring.

It's kind of surreal. *Really* surreal, actually. I've already been an Omen editor for two years, and at the same time, I've *only* been an Omen editor for two years. And those two years have flown by. It still hasn't fully settled in that I won't be doing this job next year, it feels like such a core part of who I am now that I genuinely don't know what I'll do with myself if I'm not waking up to emails from Student Engagement and going crazy in my living room every Monday trying to finish an issue in time for distribution.

Is being an Omen editor fun? Sure. If that sounds like a noncommittal answer, that's because it is. I liken it to what Zadie Smith describes as joy: that is, an experience that strikes you on a primal, bodily level, something that can never be experienced again and brings about as much pain as it does pleasure. Experiences like getting fucked up on ecstasy at a nightclub, or having children. You scream and think you may die and maybe you throw up a little but ultimately, you become joy. I wouldn't say that being an Omen editor is particularly pleasurable, but it's definitely joyful. It's one of the most joyful things I've ever experienced.

When Ida Kao[1] helped me move into my Dakin room on my first day in Massachusetts, I had no idea that our meeting would snowball into me becoming an editor for a publication I'd originally thought was Just Cool. I wasn't super passionate about the idea, I just thought it would be rather sad if the publication died out because they were in their Div III and couldn't find any new editors. Oh, how clueless my poor F21 self was.

Becoming a signer, and then later an editor for The Omen genuinely changed my life in the most neutral-positive sense of the word. If I hadn't become an editor for The Omen, I wouldn't have become so adept at using Adobe Indesign. I wouldn't have learned to loosen up and be happy with being stupid in public. I probably wouldn't have met Rachel (!!!), and I probably wouldn't know where Duplications is, and I probably wouldn't have written as many informal personal essays as I have in the past two years. And, most importantly, I wouldn't have met a lot of the friends I have now, or at the very least, we wouldn't have been as close. And that specific thought just feels so *wrong*. The Omen helped me meet my fellow signers, AND my current modmates. I love these people so, so much. Imagining life without them as some of my closest friends really gives me the creeps. (And, to be perfectly honest, I took a summer term at Stanford in 2019, and I spent the entire time alone, and left with one friend. I was worried when I came to college that that would happen again, and I really do think that if I hadn't become an Omen editor, it probably would've.)

Don't get me wrong, The Omen has given me a lot of crap on top of all the good things it's given me. That's part of the joy, I think—and I don't say that in a masochistic way, but in the sense that I only feel so much joy when thinking about my role as an editor because I have those bad times to compare the good times to, and the bad times were just rare enough to not outweigh the good times. And when I think about that, the good times feel all the gooder. I got closer to Jay because we went through those bad times together. I learned how much my friends really cared about me because I didn't know how to navigate bad times. I learned how much staff and faculty cared, too. And what do you know, I came out of it fine, with thicker skin than before and a resolution to do better, be kinder, and think harder.

But this is The Omen, and shit's not that deep. It shouldn't be, at least. Apart from the poetry I have to wax about struggles and joy, The Omen is just... fun. It's stupid, yeah, but the Venn diagram of "things that are stupid" and "things that are fun" is almost a circle. As someone who was praised as a child for be-

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1 If you're reading this, hi Ida

ing "mature for my age,"[2] I never allowed myself to be a stupid kid. The Omen allowed me to be not only a stupid kid, but a stupid adult. The difference is that my adult stupidity is a choice, and being able to make that choice fucking rules. Going into this job as a scared, nervous little freshman last year, I thought I had to worry about making The Omen look presentable, which is honestly so laughable now that I cry if I think about it for too long. As you might be able to tell by the layout of this issue, I've long since stopped giving a shit about "looking presentable." And that also fucking rules.

The last two years of my life have been entirely consumed by The Omen. There isn't a moment in which I'm *not* thinking about it, because there are always emails to be sorting, submissions to be laying, communications to be sending, and events to be planning. It's a pretty thankless job, too[3]—did you know we editors put in around 60 hours of work on The Omen *per semester*? That means we'll have used up about 240 hours of our youth on The Omen by the time we officially retire. And for what? For a twice-a-monthly publication that's so stupidly ugly it would make my graphic designer dad disown me? If you know the meme that's like, "It ain't much, but it's honest work," editing The Omen is the opposite of that. It's so much and the work is so dishonest.

But knowing that I'll have to part with this job genuinely breaks my heart. Like, okay, here's the thing—I would definitely actually break if I had to be editor for another year, especially without Jay next to me. And it'll be so nice to not have to worry about Omen stuff all the time. But at the same time, it feels like I'm watching a loved one pass. The Omen isn't dying, and neither am I,[45] but it's the same vibe, you know? Like, knowing all of my happy memories are going to be just that soon enough: just memories. I'm really sensitive when it comes to goodbyes of any sort, whether that be donating an old shirt I never actually liked wearing or giving a stuffed animal away to a family friend, and while I know I still have two years of being able to submit things, attend layout, help the new editors if needed—it still feels like a goodbye. A goodbye to my role as editor, and everything that meant for who I am. If I had it my way, I'd be Omen co-editors with Jay forever. And, if I had it my way, I'd never be an editor again. Funny how that works, right?

It's sort of embarrassing to say that I'm going through a grieving process. It's *The Omen*. It's not that deep. But fuck, dude, I really am. I know that it'll pass, though, and I'll be fine. I'm sure my third and fourth semesters of Div II will thank me greatly for not being on the clock for a student group 24/7. And I feel settled, too, knowing The Omen is going to be in the hands of Willow and Max. Truly, they are some of the most apt people for the job, with a true, identifiable passion for this thing. It helps, knowing my equally beloved, equally beloathed publication will be in the capable hands of people I trust. And it helps that I'll be close by—not physically, since, you know, Japan—to help out with the transition process. I can impart my jaded wisdom onto the bright-eyed, bushy-tailed newbies. That is genuinely important to me.

You know, the more I think about it, the more I wonder if this is what my parents felt like when I left home for college.

I wish I had more to say about this whole... thing. I *want* to say more. But my feelings for The Omen, for my job, for the bullshit that has been these past two years, aren't things I can easily put into words. I just... felt like this occasion deserved a special piece, dedicated to all the shit I've accomplished thanks to being an editor for The Omen.

I met Jay. I met Nicholas. I met Isaiah, and I also met Peter (who lived in the same hall as me, but we *definitely* would not have talked if not for The Omen). I learned how to use Indesign. I learned how to most effectively loop around campus, for the sake of distribution. I've made a lot of wonderfully horrible design choices that I still love to this day. I was there for the revival of Deathfest—and on that note, I met Ethan Ludwin-Peery! I've forced the student population to witness my OCs despite never being asked. In a similar vein, I've incorporated Sans Undertale into Tsuyuki's lore for the rest of time (Tsuyuki is not an Undertale

2 autistic
3 Dear Willow and Max if you're reading: please don't be scared off by this
4 physically
5 yet

OC). I've gotten people reaching out to me, telling me that my informal personal essays (or Leodumps) really spoke to them. I've gotten people reaching out to me about Private Stock ice cream bars (I'll write a sequel to that editorial someday). I've had countless evenings of laughter so hard it made me teary-eyed, as Jay and I made the worst design choices known to man. I've seen the ridiculous, hilarious things people have drawn in Omen Garticphone and Champ'd Up games, and the ridiculous, hilarious things people have written in Omen Job Job and Quiplash games. I've learned that it's fun to have something to cultivate and care for. I've learned that, in the end, I really am proud to say I'm an Omen editor. (Even though I'm leaving this job now, I will never stop being an Omen editor.) And, most importantly,

Penis blast.

It's been real, folks. The next time you see me, I'll just be a regular old Omen submitter. How weird is that? But hopefully, when I'm back on campus next spring, Willow and Max will be kind enough to let me do some editing on some issues, just for old time's sake. And hopefully, if that happens, you'll be able to recognize some of my shitty design choices, and know that my grubby little Omen hands were on the scene.

The Un-editorening of Jay Poggi
by Jay Poggi

When I started writing my CEL-2 Reflection, this thing leapt out of me:

I became a believer in The Omen from the moment I set foot in its goblin den of an office. Hasty sketches of webcomic characters and faded pages from long-dead student newspapers covered every square foot of wall; dry erase marker renditions of tasteless memes desecrated the white board; and a shuffling herd of Div Is huddled around an out-of-date Mac, watching as the last two weeks' worth of submissions completed their gruesome metamorphosis into a new issue of The Omen.

As I befriended Omenites new and old, I started to learn what it was that I had become a believer in. The Omen was Hampshire's then (and now) only student publication. It published every other week with little exception and accepted submissions from all students, staff, faculty, and alums. Notoriously, these submissions could be literally anything—poetry and prose, doodles and diatribes, stories newsworthy and not-safe-for-work—The Omen would print it all, as long as it wasn't anonymous or libelous. Together, these qualities made The Omen a sturdy but filthy soapbox for the Hampshire community, free for anyone to use who wasn't afraid to get their shoes dirty.

My initial interest in The Omen was purely selfish: I thought it might help me let go of my insecurity around writing. I hoped that making a habit of unleashing unfinished personal essays and short stories on the Hampshire community would train me to enjoy the act of writing unburdened by the desire to make something "good." But within literally a week of attending my first meeting and sending in my first submission, The Omen's then editor, a weary, battle-scarred Div III named Ida Kao, asked myself and Leo if we would take over for them. From then on, The Omen was more than a place for me to share my silly writing—it was a sacred responsibility.

I wrote those three paragraphs before realizing, "Wait, why the fuck am I writing an obligatory Div II essay in my Omen voice?" Such is the old rag's power: it pulls writing out of us—it grabs hold of the sticky feelings gunking up our souls, yanks them free, and splatters them onto a page in written form. I feel I owe most if not all of my creative growth throughout my time at Hampshire to this power of The

Omen. When I came here, I wanted to write well, to write brilliantly, to write in a way that would live up to my impossible expectations for myself. In comparison, all The Omen wanted was for me to write. I took a chance and trusted it, and now, when I ask myself if I'm a "good writer," I realize I don't even care. I'm too busy writing.

I've learned a lot about The Omen these past two years, more than most neurologists would recommend. I've taken deep huffs of its rancid history, witnessed first-hand its capacity to heal and harm, and come to understand the inherent contradiction between what it is meant to do and what it can do. Now, on the eve of my de-editorization, my mind is a swirling tempest of truths Omeny, personal, and some secret third thing. Sorting through them all would take more time and emotional energy than my finals-fatigued self has access to, so for now, I offer what I can: some acknowledgements to those who have helped me and/or Leo and/or Nicholas in our Omen work.

Acknowledgements

I'm planning on publishing a bunch more personal thank-yous in The Omen at the end of my Div III, so consider this list deliberately incomplete, both in terms of who I thank and what I thank them for. I'm saving the *real* sappy stuff for when I'll actually be leaving Hampshire (though I'm sure some sappiness will find its way here anyway).

Thank you to Ida for setting *gestures to the flaming debris surrounding me* all this into motion. I don't know if I would have ever gotten involved with The Omen if your incessant enthusiasm hadn't captivated me so. It was pretty weird of you to trust Leo and I with your baby. We did almost nothing to earn that trust, and we've done even less to make you proud since. Still, I'm grateful you chose us. Your baby hasn't grown all that much over the past two years, but we sure have. Maybe we were the babies all along. Also, we miss you. Our couch misses you. We talk about you every day, and sometimes all day. Let's hang out as much as we can over the Summer. I've got some creepy bugs to show you.

Thank you to Isaiah for providing two great services to The Omen, services without which it may not have survived. First, you acted as interim editor during the social and political unrest following Ida's transferral of the editorship to Leo and me. You united a divided Omen against President Wingenbach's efforts to steal (uhh let's say) millions of dollars of school property and prevented a civil war. Half a year later, you used the status and power afforded to you by the title of Fuck Monarch to bestow upon The Omen a sacred heirloom: a dildo. The dildo became a symbol of the spirit of The Omen, a symbol that persists even now, deep inside every Omenite, despite the tragic, corporeal absence of the real thing (I swear to God we WILL find the thief). You will always be a hero, to The Omen and to us.

Thank you to Nicholas for being the undefeated Champ of Champs. Leo and I would have died at least thirty more times if you hadn't been there on the front lines wrangling hungry Omenites, sprinting across campus to fetch POs, and livening up Layout with your mind-rending humor. More than any of those things, we're grateful for your companionship. Your presence alone gave us the strength to persist through the most harrowing chunks of this journey. While I'll miss being your co-signer, I'm glad that being de-editorized will give me more freetime with which to talk about sci-fi with you, play RPGs with you, and otherwise enjoy being your friend.

Thank you to Casper for smacking sense into us in our darkest hour. It doesn't make any sense at all for The Omen to have a "coach," but I think that's what you are. You've done quite a lot for us since joining the team, but I think your greatest contribution was scaring Rachel so bad that it took her a full hour to recover (I'm sorry Rachel it was REALLY funny). I have not gotten to spend nearly as much time with you as I would like, but I think you're a cool dude. Let's hang out more next year.

Thank you to Rachel for literally everything. If I started listing things, I wouldn't know where to start, and I don't think I'd ever stop. What I do know is that from the moment you started working here,

our jobs felt both more doable and more enjoyable; and every time we meet with you, it's the highlight of our month. I don't know how much vacation time Hampshire gives you, but I know they need to triple it.

Thank you to Alice for processing all of our purchase orders, and to Melissa for printing all of our Omens this year. Both of you have had to put up with a fair bit of Omen-brand nonsense this year, from unexpectedly huge issues to tardiness to extreme tardiness. We're endlessly grateful for your patience and understanding.

Thank you to Ethan for a whole lot, including reviving Deathfest, submitting a bunch of cool articles, and for encouraging me to go fucking crazy this semester. Through writing essays, reading the articles you've sent me, and talking with you about seemingly everything everywhere all at once, my way of thinking about life and people and the world has changed dramatically since the start of the semester, and yet my thoughts feel more like "me" than they ever have. Is that what growing up feels like? Either way, I'm excited to work with you on my Div III next year. I have a feeling it will turn out exactly 0% like I expect it to.

Thank you to Willow and Max for agreeing to take care of The Omen, which I now realize has become OUR baby. I could list many skills and attributes that make you qualified to be editors, but none of them would actually explain why we thought you two were the ones for the job. The truth is, we could just tell. I think Omen editors develop a sort of sixth sense for detecting people with the same brain sickness as us, the same unruly mix of perplexingly-placed passion, subtle sensitivity, obsession, compulsion, and cranially vacant comedy. Seriously though, it means a lot to know that The Omen will be in your hands now. I can't wait to see what you'll do. I hope you'll get weird with it. Change the fonts. Rewrite the HampEngage Description. Ban porn for a month, and then ban everything OTHER than porn. Whatever you do, always remember: you are more important than The Omen. It may be a baby, but it's an immortal eldritch demon baby. It will outlive all of us. You, on the other hand, are squishy mortal human babies. Take care of yourselves. If ever you find yourselves weighing a good night's sleep and meeting your printing deadline, take the sleep. Your bodies will thank you, and Hampshire students won't know the difference.

Thank you to Leo for being my co-editor. I never knew I wanted a co-editor, and now I don't know what I'd do without one. We joke often about how nut-bonkers it is that the first two pathologically empathetic saps Ida picked off the street happened to make such an annoying pair of friends, but seriously, it's fucking weird. I think something about editing The Omen together allowed us to know each other's real selves more immediately and more vividly than any other activity possibly could have. Like, when we made Section Horse, that was literally the fifth time we'd hung out. Anyway, there's a lot I could thank you for, like enabling my graphic design crimes, grounding us with your rock-solid values through emotionally tumultuous times, and giving me a deeper, much harder-to-describe connection with Sans Undertale; but really, most of my gratitude goes to The Omen for smooshing our lives together in the deranged way that it did. I know you aren't going anywhere (except back to Texas and then to Japan but I'm speaking figuratively you know what I mean), but I really am going to miss editing with you every other week. We're gonna have to get on a Discord call and make something stupid in InDesign every once in a while just to placate these monkeys that live in our brains now (thanks Ida [and I'm sorry Max and Willow—we forgot to mention the monkeys]).

section

YOU ARE NOT IMMUNE TO PROPAGANDA

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LETS FUCKING GOOOOOOOOOOO

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PENIS BLAST! PENIS BLAST!

You have no idea how stressful this is to me. I have been waiting all year for this stupid color issue so I can put a bunch of pictures of Gakupo, the best vocaloid. Now that it's actually here, the pressure is on somehow? Like there's somehow pressure??? No one is asking me to do this.

I know you're also probably wondering, "Because they were black and white, couldn't you have just put Kentaro Miura's early character designs in any of the other issues?" I ask you to please stop talking to me.

All of these are official art by Kentaro Miura, who created Gakupo's design. If you recognize that name or the artstyle, you may be familiar with the *Berserk* manga and anime series by Miura. May he rest in peace

You can see that Gakupo looks like a cyber samurai. Please really think about how cool that is for a moment. Canonically (not in vocaloid canon but in the Lord's canon), Gakupo has the best character design of any vocal synth. He also has the best voice.

My fav part of his fandom page: "The patterns on its blade make musical sounds when it is swung down. The sword exists because producers wanted a link to a musical instrument and there were no objections to the use of a weapon."

Obviously I have way more to share/talk about but I want to keep this submission short and I also have about ninety-nine overdue assignments. If you have the slightest bit of interest in vocal synth stuff, please join my new club, Vocal Synthesis and Related Media. If you have no interest in vocal synth stuff, learn to love yourself by joining my new club, Vocal Synthesis and Related Media. As I write this, that club is not on HampEngage yet but I pray the great gods of Student Engagement will approve the registration form before this issue is distributed. | Congrats to all S23 graduates!!

Fun Ways to Celebrate Your Six-Month Anniversary with Someone, Regardless of Your And Their Romantic And Sexual Orientation Or Gender Identity

by J. E. Cramer & Pierce Docherty; foreword by J. E. Cramer

In the time since the publication of *The Beatles*, I have had the good fortune to celebrate six months with somebody I love dearly. That day also marked six months since 2022's National Feral Cat Day, which is neither here nor there. There are many ways that we could have celebrated our six-month anniversary—for example, I could have read the twenty-fourth section of Richard Siken's acclaimed poem "You Are Jeff" and spent the next several minutes dreaming of the day that I, too, can next spend a few minutes in a car with a beautiful boy, specifically on our way to the nearest Waffle House. Once there, I would instruct him to cover his ears while the waiter takes my order—as much as I trust him, I fear that no one could love a man who takes his hash browns *only* smothered, diced, and capped.

However, many people out there would *not* be as inclined as I am to spend their time in a car with a beautiful boy, regardless of how much he loves you, whether he'll tell you, and whether "you feel like you've done something terrible, like robbed a liquor store, or swallowed pills, or shoveled yourself a grave in dirt, and you're tired (Siken, 2004)," or even think about doing so while reading poetry. Many of my readers would rather spend their time on a bicycle built for two with a beautiful woman, or waiting at the Amtrak station for somebody specific who they trust a great deal, or on one of the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority's many buses with no one at all. So, no matter your or their romantic and sexual orientation or gender identity, here are nine fantastic things to do for your six-month anniversary with somebody.

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*~

1. Freeze half a tray of ice cubes together. While it's in the freezer, discuss who would win in a fight: A middle-school gym teacher armed with a crossbow and unlimited bolts, or a sentient EXEC 162F helicopter. In this scenario, the gym teacher has also just entered the state of New Jersey for the first time and discovered that, by law, they cannot pump their own gas.

One of my gym teachers from middle school is a lesbian now. The other left his wife for the new math teacher.

2. Think about what the two of you might be named if you didn't have the names you do.

He looks like he might be called Stanley or Stevie or perhaps Herbert, though only when he's wearing stripes, and I look like a North American barn owl. For reference:

(Rowe, 2018)

3. Reenact your first date.

There's nothing quite so romantic as hauling someone out of the woods through a quarter-mile-long patch of brambles.

4. Invent a new sex act together.

For example, the Oklahoma Stand-Off, wherein you play five rounds of Twister and each try to get the other off—in the biblical sense, of course—without moving from your current position, the William Henry Harrison, where regardless of what actually happens, you must finish in no more or less than 40 seconds, or the Baltimore Harbor, which is when you flog your partner with a rolled-up windbreaker jacket.

5. Start a Grammy-winning folk duo.

Years later, independently cheat on one another with someone you meet at the tenth album release party for your second album. Both you and your fetching stranger will no doubt be too completely covered in burlap and corduroy to see much of anything, so little do you and your partner know that your extra-scratchy extramarital affair was with each other.

6. Read "Fun Gender-Neutral Terms of Endearment" by J. E. Cramer & Pierce Docherty and take to calling one another any number of the fun gender-neutral terms of endearment you find therein.

My personal favorites include Arcane Weapon, O Libelous One, Flippo, Steel Dragon 2000, and

Pagliacci.

7. Attend a guided house viewing and insist on referring to all the rooms inside by the wrong names.

The living room: the kitchen. The kitchen: the living room. The dining room: the room with all the scorpions. The bedroom: the room that time forgot. The basement: *The Room* (2003) dir. Tommy Wiseau. The bathroom: the half-bath.

8. Smash a half-full bottle of your favorite drink against the side of the first boat you see.

This is actually what happened to the *Titanic*—two young lovers, neither of whom bore any distinct resemblance to either Kate Winslet or Leonato Dicarluccio, went to great lengths to break a champagne bottle filled halfway with two-percent milk against the newly-christened *Titanic*, but they neglected to break the bottle against a metal fixture so as not to damage the ship's hull or consider that, given that the ship had already only recently been formally named, the *Titanic*, the sea herself, and all measure of decency in the world found the two's actions redundant. In all, the two hundred thirty-four impacts of glass against rolled steel served to weaken the starboard side of the *Titanic* just enough so that it, unlike the *Kronprinz William* five years before, was decisively foundered by the iceberg it struck.

9. Get them a 50-year perpetual nautical desk calendar and paperweight.

Nothing better than a 50-year perpetual nautical desk calendar and paperweight.

10. Author an Omen article together.

Very meta. Very beautiful. Very powerful.

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Fun Sex Acts You Can Do with Someone Regardless of Your And Their Gender Identity or Presentation
by J. E. Cramer & Pierce Docherty; foreword by J. E. Cramer

While *writing Fun Ways to Celebrate Your Six-Month Anniversary with Someone, Regardless of Your And Their Romantic And Sexual Orientation Or Gender Identity*, I asked my esteemed collaborator Pierce Docherty for help devising some of the examples for #4: Invent a sex act together. The results are, and I apologize, as follows:

1. Danish Democracy:
     Kill your brother and fuck his wife.

2. Oklahoma Stand-Off:*
     Play five rounds of Twister and try to get one another off--in the biblical sense, of course--without moving from your current position.

3. Divorce, Italian Style:
     Reenact the plot of the eponymous 1962 film.

4. The William Henry Harrison:**
     Regardless of what you do, you must finish--in the biblical sense, of course--in no more or less than 40 seconds.

5. Sexual Waterboarding:
     Regular waterboarding, which you and your partner for some reason derive sexual gratification from.

6. Fight Keg:
     Remarkably combative sex in the midst of at least a quarter-cup of sand.

7. This Is Spinal Tap:
     Whoever can more realistically be expected to play the electric bass is stuck inside the closet, and the other party involved takes care of business--in the biblical sense, of course--by themselves. The individual trapped in the closet should finally escape immediately after their partner has reached climax.

8. The Mae West:
     Dress provocatively and speak in much the same manner to someone of your choosing. Once they're intrigued, drop the eponymous film star's famous line: "Why don't you come up and see me sometime." Once they do, simply sit down and read a book. No actual sex will take place.

9. Baltimore Harbor:***
     You and your partner flog one another with a rolled-up windbreaker jacket.

10. The RMS Titanic:
     Have sex as you normally would, except the bed is scattered with bits of ice. Afterwards, determine which of you has to spend the night on the floor and who "gets" to sleep in the midst of many rapidly melting ice cubes.

11. The RMS Titanic 2!:
     Have normal, god-honoring car sex, then fill said car with water.

WHAT WOULD YOU do?
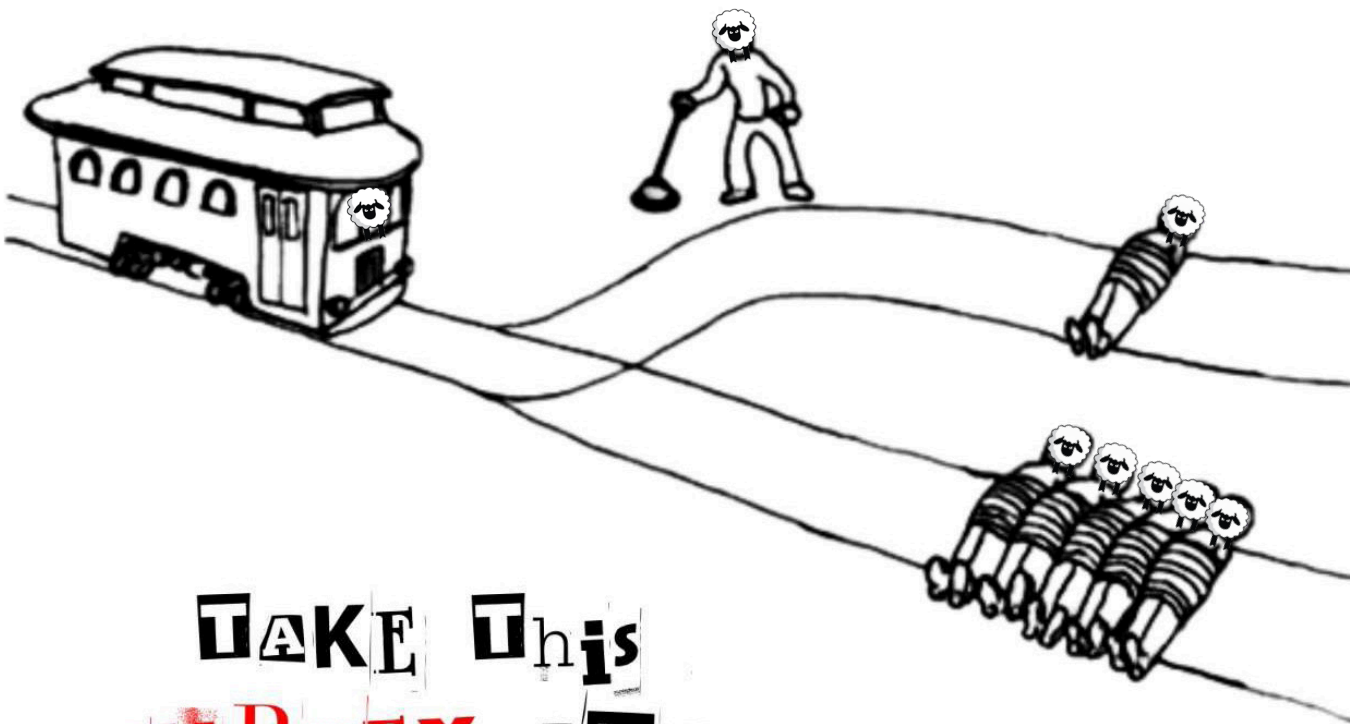
TAKE This sURVEY AND LET Us KNoW

SECTION... BEHOLD!

"the liberals want to turn dr manhattan into doctor theyhattan and the watchmen into the watchthem" by Nicholas Utakis-Smith 🐑

by Anna Bogler

↑ by Arden Young ↓

Damn bro,
you got the whole squad laughing

untitled
lucky legs
by Justice Wilson

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BhHdZr7I-Xg
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